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THE  
GROUNDS  
OF  
Civil and Ecclesiastical  
GOVERNMENT  
Briefly Consider'd,

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By JOHN JACKSON, Rector of  
*Rossington in Yorkshire.*

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To which is added,  
*A Defence of the Bishop of Bangor,*  
Against the  
Objections of Mr LAW.

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*The Second Edition,*

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T H E  
G R O U N D S  
O F

*Civil and Ecclesiastical Polity*

briefly Consider'd, &c.



T is not only a very just Observation, but almost every Man's Practice testifies; That we live in an Age wherein *true Religion*, viz. a Sound unprejudic'd Faith, avoiding equally each Extreme of *Superstition* and *Infidelity*; and a steady, constant Holiness of Life, equally free from *Hypocrisy* and *Profaneness*; was never less made the Subject of Men's Studies and Inquiries, and the Care and Endeavour of their Actions and Conversations. But instead hereof, the Study and Confusion of *Politics*, and Industry and Zeal to support and encrease *Party* and *Faction*, wholly possess Men's Minds, and employ all their Thoughts; and are the chief Spring and Principle of all their Actions. So that every



one now looks on another, not as a *Fellow-Christian*, but *Fellow-Party-Man*; and thinks himself oblig'd to discharge the great Duties of *Benevolence* and *Charity*, if at all to Others, yet not as being of *the same Household of Faith*, as St Paul exhorts, *Gal. 6. 10*; but as being Members of the same *Faction*, Promoters of the same *Interest*, as 'tis call'd. Which, amongst many, is not to serve, either God, their *Country*, or oftimes even *Themselves*; but consists in violently opposing, and studying all Means to defeat the Designs and Endeavours of those of the contrary Side, however well laid or meant, or really tending to the Benefit and Good of the Public: in keeping up and cherishing *Jealousies* and *Disaffection* to their Governours; in representing all their Actions as *suspicious*, and their Power as *mean* and *contemptible*, or else as *formidable* and *tyrannical*; and in contriving all Ways to make Others uneasy, and to disturb the Peace, lessen the Credit, and weaken the Hands of the Government.

And since, by the *Violence* and *Prevalency* of our unhappy Divisions, many Thousands of *sincere* Persons, having very *Honest Intentions*, are impos'd upon; and, through false Pretences, and ill-grounded and malicious Insinuations, led away from their Duty; and are not able to see, and (what is worse) do, through Ignorance and mistaken Zeal, earnestly oppose the real Interest of both *Church* and *State*; while, at the same Time they unhappily and fatally think they are maintaining and supporting both: I shall for the removing *Prejudice* out of such *Honest Minds*, and for the Interest and Love of *Truth*, and the Desire of *Christian Peace* and *Charity*, endeavour to shew from evident Principles of *Reason* and *Scripture*, wherein the Nature of the Christian Religion, and of all rightful Civil Government consists; and thence demonstrate the true and uncontestable *Rights* of both *Church* and *State*.

In order to this, I shall

I. *First*, Lay open the true Foundation, and Original Grounds of all Humane Laws in General, whether *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil*. And

II. *Secondly*, Consider in distinct Particulars the *Nature, Design, Extent and Obligation*, 1<sup>st</sup>, of *Civil Laws*; 2<sup>dly</sup>, Of *Ecclesiastical*: And draw thence such Arguments and Conclusions, as may be for Common Benefit and Instruction, and worthy the serious Consideration of such as are sincerely desirous to promote the true Interest both of *Church* and *State*.

I. *First*, The *Matter* which constitutes *Humane Laws* in General, is not to be deriv'd [as some great Lawyers and States-men have thought,] from the meer *Will* of political Societies consenting to what may most advance, each, their own particular *Interest* and *Power*. This *Machiavellian* Notion too much contracts the *Humanity* of our Nature, and gives too much Occasion to unreasonable and inordinate Ambition, and to the unjust Oppression of our Neighbours, and Usurpation of their Rights. Therefore these *Politics* in the \* *Lacedemonian* State, were antiently condemned. But it springs from a truly *Divine* Original, and is founded in the great *Universal Law of Nature*, which results immediately from the *Divine Nature* itself, and is the very Mind and Will of God communicated with the Use of

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\* Λακεδαιμόνιοι τὴν πρώτῃν τῆ καλῆς μετέωρ τῆ ἰσότητος συμφέροντι διδόντες, ἕτερον μανθάνουσιν, ἕτερον δὲ ἀποστασίας διακρίνον ἀλλο, πλὴν ὅ τὴν Σπάρτην αὐξάνει νομίζουσιν.

The *Lacedemonians* placing the prime Principle of *Honesty* in promoting the Weal of their Country, have no other Notion of *Right*, but the advancing the Interest and Power of *Sparta*. *Plutarch* in *Agesil*.



Reason to all Mankind; and enlarg'd and improv'd by the Help and Light of Revelation. Hence it was the Doctrine of the *Stoics* † that the *Original of Law* was deriv'd from God and *Nature*. So that *Humane Laws* in General, whether *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil*, that have a true and right Foundation, are only *particular* Deductions from the general Principles of *Nature* or *Reason*, or from the *reveal'd Law* of God, establish'd by common Consent in every Political Society for the public Good, according as their Exigences of the particular State of their Circumstances may require; with the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments annex'd, to encourage and enforce the Observance of them. Hence, as the necessary Relations arising by Nature betwixt particular Men, and the mutual Obligations consequent thereupon, are the Reason and Ground of Men's entering into public Societies, in order to secure and maintain their Natural Rights, which are the Foundation of those Laws by which they consent to be govern'd, and to make them the Rule of their Actions towards one another: So *Secondly*,

The Relations which whole distinct Societies bear to one another, and the reciprocal Obligations arising thence, are the Foundation of the *great universal Law* of Nations; which cannot be restrain'd, or limited, or dispens'd with by any Law of any particular Society; all Nations having an equal Concernment in it, and Right to the Benefit of it. And further, *Thirdly*,

Since God is the Cause and Lord of *Nature*, and all its Laws are only finite imperfect Transcripts of his Eternal Truth and Reason; whenever or wherever he pleases to superadd to Natural Light, his

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† ἡ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὑπερὶν τῆ δικαιοσύνης ἀλλοῦ ἀρχῆς, ἢ δὲ ἀλλοῦ γένους, ἢ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ Διὸς ἢ πρὶν ἐκ τῆ κοινῆ φύσεως. The Foundation and Original of Right, can only be deriv'd from God, and from common Nature. Chrysippus iiii de Dies.

reveal'd Will; this is the Law *paramount* to all others. And not only the Law of particular Nations, but That which is common to All Nations and Kingdoms that have the Knowledge of this Revelation, must be regulated by it, and always stand in *Subordination* to it; and no Humane Law can ever be good, or obligatory, that is contrary to it. The Reason is evident; because the true Foundation of all Humane Laws being (as I have said) the Principles of Natural Reason; those Principles which are the most certain and perfect, must needs be superior to, and regulate the rest: And it being the prime and most certain Principle of Reason, that we must believe and act according to whatsoever God reveals to be his Will; 'tis plain that his reveal'd Will, which is not and cannot be contrary to the Law of Nature: but enlargeth and improves it, must be the Guide and Director, and give Laws to all other Laws whatsoever. In what has been now said, this Demonstration is most clearly contain'd, *viz.* That no particular Human Law of any Nation whatsoever, ought to contradict any one Principle of Natural Reason; and therefore must neither interfere with the general Law of Nations, nor with the reveal'd Law of God, whether *positive* or *moral*, whenever made *known*. That the Principles of Natural Reason improv'd by Revelation, are the only true Foundation of all Laws, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*; is plain from hence, that no other can compleat the Design and End of all Government, which is ordain'd by the Will of God for his own Glory, and the Happiness of Mankind: But by acting according to the Light of Nature, and the express Divine Will, God's Glory is most advanc'd, and Man's Happiness therein properly and only consists: Therefore whenever any Humane Laws deviate from these Principles, they are imperfect, and have no Power and Efficacy to promote the public Good: And it is the great Business and Duty of Legislators, to provide

wide Remedies for such Laws, either by amending or repealing them ; or, if that cannot easily be done, it belongs to the Executors and Interpreters of them, either to forbear the Execution of them ( if they are evidently unjust or unreasonable, ) or at least to put the softest and mildest Construction on them ; that so the Law which is design'd to be the *Security and Life* of the Publick, may not be the *Damage or Destruction* of the Whole, or of any considerable Part of it.

So much shall suffice for the *First* General Head.

II. I come now, *Secondly*, to consider, in distinct Particulars, the *Nature, Design, Extent and Obligation*, 1<sup>st</sup>. of the *Civil Laws*, and 2<sup>dly</sup>. of the *Ecclesiastical*, and to draw thence such Propositions or Conclusions, as naturally arise from them.

1<sup>st</sup>. The *Nature* of the *Civil Laws* of all Nations is founded [ as I have prov'd ] in the Principles of Natural Reason, and hath a necessary Relation to the Natural Rights of Mankind ; for the Preservation and Security of which Rights, Men enter into Society, and consent to the making of Laws ; the Design of which, is to secure to every particular Member his own private Rights, by obliging every one to mutual Help and Assistance for the Good of the Whole. Hence it follows, 1<sup>st</sup>.

That no Man can *naturally* have a Right to govern any Society, without Their *Consent* who are to be govern'd, either express'd by every one in Person, or by his Representative ; or *tacitly* imply'd by their Acquiescence in what the *major Part*, or any considerable Part of the Society shall undertake or transact for the whole. This is evident, because all Men are *equal* in Nature, and have *equal* Natural Rights ; and so one Man cannot *naturally* have any more Power over another, than another over him. To suppose the contrary, *viz.* that one Man can have

have *naturally* Power over another, when all are *equal* in Nature, and have *equal* natural Rights; is to suppose that all Men are *equal* and *not equal* in Nature, and have *equal* and *not equal* natural Rights; which is an express Contradiction. It follows, *2dly*,

That as no Man can have a *natural* Right to govern others without their *Consent*, so neither can he have a Right to govern them in any *manner*, or by any *Laws* but such as promote and secure the public Good; the public Good being nothing but the natural Rights of private particular Persons; entering into Society to preserve them by such Means as they shall judge best for the Whole; whether by agreeing to standing written Laws made by such Persons and in such Manner as they shall appoint, and engaging their joynt Force and Power for the Execution and Observance of them; or by entrusting the Preservation of their Rights, and the Government of their Persons, to the sole Will and Direction of One whom they shall appoint to be the *Supreme Magistrate*; and whom they oblige themselves to assist with the joynt Force of the Community; in Order to support him in the Exercise of his Power for the *public Good*. Hence, the Nature of all *Civil* Government depending on the Law of Nature; and it being the very End and Design of it, to procure and preserve the Peace and Happiness of any public political Society; it demonstratively follows,

That the *public Good*, in all Governments, is the *Supreme indispensable Law*, to which all others must be conformable, or give Place; and that all Governments, of what kind soever, are in their own Natures absolutely *equal* in Power; and that no Government, or *Supreme Legislative Power*, can have a Right to make Laws, or do any Thing, that is *destructive* of the public Welfare; and that the Community, from whose Consent alone all Power is *naturally deriv'd*, [into whatsoever Hands,] for the Preservation

on of their natural Rights, which is the public Good; must have a Power or Right to maintain and defend those Rights by Force, *whenever* or by *whomsoever* they are invaded: And since *Liberty, Property, and Religion*, are the great natural Rights common to all Mankind, and for the Preservation of which they enter into Societies; it must follow, that as no one can ever have a Right to invade or deprive a Nation of these, so the Community [under whatever Government] must always have a Right to preserve and secure them against any Opposition: *whatsoever*

Hence it follows also, that all Obligations to obey the governing Powers, whether *express'd* by taking Oaths, or *tacitly imply'd* by consenting to receive their Protection; and all Statutes and Laws, made as *Means* for determining the Rights both of Rulers and People, are always to be understood to be directed to, and limited by the Ends of Government; and intended reciprocally to secure the *just Powers and Prerogatives* of the Crown against all *rebellious* Invasions, and the *just Rights and Property* of the Subjects from all *Tyrannical Usurpation*: And no Oaths, or other Obligations whatsoever, can be understood to bind any Nation to be *passive* to their own *manifest* Destruction. To suppose Oaths or any other Contract to carry such an Obligation in them, is to suppose that Men may swear or agree to let Others without any Cause cut their Throats, or reduce them into Slavery; which is indeed *themselves* to cut their own Throats, or enslave themselves; which is a manifest Absurdity; and can never bind, as being contrary to the *prior* Obligations of the Law of Nature, to preserve themselves and their own and Posterities Properties by any just or necessary Means. So that when a People are protected, then their Allegiance is due, and when all Protection ceaseth, then the Obligation to Service and Obedience ceaseth also.



2dly, A second Proposition arising from the Consideration of the Nature and Design of *Civil Laws*, is; that the proper *Substance* or *Matter* of Humane Laws, is not as some have thought, Things in their own Nature *meerly indifferent*, but hath always a *relative* tho' not *absolute* Morality. Laws being only particular Deductions from the general Principles of Natural Reason relating to the common Rights of Mankind, which they are intended to preserve unviolated; 'tis plain that they have always a *Regard* to public Benefit, to things either *necessary* or *good* for the whole: And therefore, tho' they may be *indifferent*, *separately* consider'd, and *abstractedly* in themselves; yet they acquire a *moral* Nature by their *Relation* to the particular State and Circumstances of the Society, and their *Aptitude* to promote the *public Good*. The Ground of the Mistake in thinking otherwise, is, that before Laws are enacted, many Things seem to particular Persons *wholly indifferent* in their Natures, and which they think every one has a Right to do or not, as he pleases; not perceiving or considering the Consequences, that redound from thence to the public: But these very Things, when strictly and impartially examin'd by wise and able Men, appear to be *beneficial* or *prejudicial* to the Society; and so become fit Matter, either to be enjoyn'd or prohibited by Law. And hence it is, that the *moral* Obligation from the *Matter* of *Humane Laws*, ariseth: And it is by no means true, that the Obligation to *all* *penal* *Humane Laws* is fully satisfy'd by undergoing the Penalty of them: For every Law, *preceptive* or *prohibitory*, being directed more or less to the promoting the Public Good; and it being always a *moral* Obligation on every one, to promote the Public Good; every Law so made and directed to its proper End, must carry not only a *penal*, but *moral* Obligation along with it. To suppose the *Matter* of any *Humane Laws*, in its own both *absolute* and *relative*

*relative Nature, to be mere'y indifferent; is to suppose the Laws themselves, when made, indifferent as to any material Obligation, and consequently ridiculous. For it the Matter be thus in its own Nature indifferent before the making it into a Law, the making it into a Law cannot make it to be otherwise, [whatever Regard may be due for Peace and Order's sake to the public Authority enacting it, which is another Thing;] and so the Law can have no material Force or Obligation, having no End to be serv'd by it. 'Tis true indeed, that the Matter of Laws may sometimes happen to be either wholly indifferent, for Want of Prudence in the Legislators; or but, ul, by Means of their Vanity, Covetousness, Faction, or Ambition; and yet they may oblige the Conscience, when they cannot be disobey'd without Breach of public Peace, or Danger of public Disorder. The Regard to the Legislative Authority, which cannot be oppos'd without Damage to the public, must, tho' the Matter it enacts be unjust, if it is not immoral in him that submits to it, supersede private Rights. Nor can it be said that Laws made about the Modes and Circumstances of Things, are wholly of an indifferent Nature; For Modes, howsoever indifferent consider'd abstractedly and in themselves, have yet a necessary Relation to the Performance of public Actions; and so become fit Matter for Humane Laws; which oblige the Consciences of Men to comply with such Ceremonies, as the Judgment of the Legislature, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, shall appoint for the sake of Decency and Order.*

From these Observations, another Conclusion ariseth; that since Time, and Change of Circumstances, alter the Nature of many Things; when by these it comes to pass that the Means provided for carrying on the End of any Law, cease or are unfit; or the End itself ceaseth, or becomes unprofitable; then the natural Obligation of the Law ceaseth also. Again,

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From the Original *Nature* and *Design* of *Humane* Laws, which are only just and reasonable Means to preserve Men's natural Rights, another very *material* Conclusion follows; *viz.* That no Governour, whether appointed by *God* or *Man*, can pretend a Divine Power or Commission to dispense with those Laws which are *necessary* to the Preservation of the People in those Rights: Unless it can be shewn from some plain and evident Tokens of God's reveal'd Will, that God hath expressly put the Lives and Properties of the Subjects *absolutely* in the Power of their Rulers; and disabled or prohibited them from using any Means *necessary* to defend them: That is, unless it can be shewn, that tho' 'tis God's Will that Government should be settled by *Humane Ordinance* and *Agreement*, for the public Good and Happiness of Mankind, as the best Means to secure to them those great natural Rights which he hath given them, *viz.* *Liberty*, *Property* and *Religion*; and therefore that all *Higher Powers* were design'd by him; as *St. Paul* says, to be *Ministers to us for Good*; yet that 'tis his Will that Men should not maintain and defend those Rights, when they are openly invaded by those who ought to protect and secure them; and that thereby he hath made them so *precarious*, as to put it in the Power of *one Man* [whenever his Lust and Ambition shall prompt him] to destroy without Restraint the Lives or Fortunes of a whole Nation. What is this, but to make God's reveal'd Law contradict his *natural* Law, which it was design'd to improve and perfect? and defeat [without the Intervention of his extraordinary or miraculous Power, which he hath no where promis'd to interpose,] his own Purposes in the Advancement of his own Glory and the Happiness of his Creatures? But it is most certain and evident, that God sent his Son *not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, *Matt. 5. 17*; and that he hath strengthened the Duty both of Rulers and Subjects with an *higher* Obligation.

*Obligation* than the Law of Nature was able to do ; but yet hath not alter'd the *natural* State or Condition of the Rights of *Either*. In whatever Circumstances he found Humane Government, in those he left it ; Whatever just Powers any Governours had *before* the Revelation of Christianity, they have *still* the same, neither more nor less : And whatever Rights the People had *before*, and Power to maintain those Rights, they have yet the same : Christianity hath neither given occasion to the *People* to be *rebellious*, nor to *Kings* to be *tyrannical* : And therefore no *King* or *higher Power* hath any Exemption by the Gospel, from being restrained or resisted by the Community, when it is necessary for the Defense and Preservation of the natural Rights of that Community. We know that *David* arm'd himself in his own Defense against the unjust Persecution of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* chap. 22. &c. And the valiant Family of the *Maccabees* stands renown'd in *Jewish* History for making War against their Tyrant *Antiochus* and his Successors, in Defense of their Lives and the Laws of their Country : And the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, chap. 11. 34. commends their *Faith*, which made them successful in so doing. And the wise *Roman Senate* calmly resolv'd \* to put the Tyrant *Nero* to Death, as being an Enemy to his Country. All which Instances are unanswerable Arguments, that the most vertuous and holy of God's antient People, and Men of the greatest and most *Sedate* natural Judgment and Reason, have thought it lawful to withstand by Force the Fury and Oppression of Tyrannical Rulers. And the Histories of all *Christian Nations* bear ample Testimony, that They

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\* *Perlatas a castore Phaontis codicillos praecepit, legitq; se horem a Senatu judicatum, & quari ut puniatur more majorum. Succ. in Neron. c. 49.*

always thought it agreeable to the Law of the Gospel, to defend the Lives and Properties of the Community, when violated by the *Arbitrary Usurpation* and Invasion of † *Tyrants*; for such all Rulers are when they cease to govern with Justice and Equity. This shews that the *grand Principle* of *Self-Preservation* and of the *public Good*, being the *Supreme Law*, is not only *natural*, but *Christian*.

And one wou'd think, the Reflection on the horrid and dismal Consequences never failing more or less to attend the unlimited *Arbitrary Power* of Princes; should be alone sufficient to convince considering and reasonable Men, that no just Plea, either from *natural* or *divine Law*, can be made for it: that neither *God* nor *Nature* ever design'd to uphold, or bear Tyrants harmless, when exercising a lustful and exorbitant Power over the Lives or Liberties of their Subjects. We cannot but observe, that where-ever unlimited *Arbitrary Power* prevails, there is no such Thing as *Religion* or *Liberty*: *Religion* there, is no better than a *State Policy*; the great *Rule* of it, being the *Will* and *Interest* of the Sovereign Power: and *Liberty* is no other than a *precarious Title* to *Life* and *Property*. *Learning* is either wholly banish'd, as in all *Mahometan Countries*; or encouraged only as an artful Means to support establish'd and gainful Error and Deceit, as in all *Papish Countries*. *Trade* and *Industry* must needs decay, when Men work only as *Slaves* to hard and rigid Masters, and are in the greatest Danger if they prove *fortunate* and *wealthy*. And even the *Power* itself of such Rulers, tho' it seems more than *Hu-*

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† ἐπὶ τῆ βασιλευς τυραννίδος, ἐπὶ βασιλευς ὀπάρχου, ἀλλὰ  
 ἄλλοι. ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλευς, ἀλλὰ παρ' ἀλλοτρίων κραταιοῦς.  
 A wicked King [in the Sense above mentioned] is no longer a  
 King, but a Tyrant; not sent from God, but from (wicked)  
 Men. *Apost. Constit. Lib. 8. Ch. 2.*



*man*, is, unless it fall into *good* or *wise* Hands, really more *weak* and *impotent* than the *Power* of those whose *Rule* is limited by *Laws*. And no Nation is so secure against *external* or *internal* Invasion, as that, whose *Law* is the *Measure* of the Rulers *Power* and the Subjects *Obedience*; because no People are so valiant and *unanimous* as those, who fight for *Religion* and *Liberty* under the Protection of *Laws*. So that even an *Arbitrary* King must rule as if he was not so, if he designs to make his Government secure and lasting. Which, I think, is a Demonstration, that *God* and *Nature* intended that all Government shou'd be establish'd upon *Laws* consented to by the People; and that, as \* *Plato* says, the best Government is *νομοκρατία*, *Monarchy limited by Laws*. And tho' I will not deny, but that, where the *Arbitrary* Rule of *Kings* happens to be settled upon *Conquest*, or upon the People's giving up their *Right*; it may justly be continued, and ought not to be disturb'd as long as the Ends of Government are serv'd by it; yet, as I have prov'd before, it can give to no Ruler a *Right* to dispose of the Lives or Liberties of his Subjects upon the Motive of his *meer Will*; and therefore may be restrain'd, [tho' it be limited by no *express* Law, the Law of *Nature* being always a *tacit* and *indispensable* Law,] whenever it shall be exercis'd to the manifest Destruction of the Community.

I shall conclude this Head of Argument, by drawing another very evident and *material* Conclusion from it; *viz.* That where any *Crown* is by the *Laws* of the Land made *Hereatary*; and this *Right* happens to be forfeited by any *Incapacity* natural or moral, in the King in Possession; then, as in the former Case, the Government standing, the *Right* of the *Crown* immediately and regularly

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\* *Plato in Politic, vers. Finis*

descends to the next Heir who is *capable* of it; so in the latter Case, the Laws being *set aside*, and the Subjects Rights invaded, and the Government being entirely *dissolv'd* by *arbitrary* and *tyrannical* Usurpation, there necessarily devolves again to the Nation a rightful Power, to settle and limit the Government in such manner as to provide effectually for their future Security against any the like or other Invasions: And no Persons, *however qualify'd*, can justly pretend, (by vertue of being *Heirs* of him who abdicated the Crown by refusing to Rule according to the Laws on which it was settled, and by which it was limited, or by refusing to protect the Subjects in their Just and natural Rights,) to have any Title to it, and therefore with much more Reason *may* and *ought* they to be excluded, if they be judg'd *incapable* of it. That the *Hereditary* Right even of *absolute Monarchs*, and even tho' settled by God himself, is not *indefeasible*, but may give place to the Good of the Publick on less Occasion than the total Dissolution of a Government by *Tyranny* and *Oppression*; we have a famous Instance in Scripture. It is expressly said, 2 King. 23. 30. 2 Chron. 36. 1. *that the People of the Land* [the Jews] *took Jehoabaz the* [younger] *Son of Josiab*, [compare 2 K. 23. 31, with ver. 36. and 2 Chron. 36. v. 2. with v. 5.] *and anointed him, and made him King in his Father's stead.* 'Tis evident that Jehoabaz was younger Brother to Eliakin or Jehoiachin, being but *twenty three Years old*, when the other was *twenty five*, according to the express Words of Scripture; and yet the People, without Regard to the *Hereditary* Right, (tho' immediately founded by God himself in the Family of David, and according to which the Crown of Judah ordinarily descended to the *Eldest* Branch of it,) *anointed* Jehcahaz the *Younger* Branch to be their King. Which *Anointing*, 'tis farther remarkable, was a Testimony according to their Custom, that not only Jehoabaz was Design'd to reign

over them, but his *Heirs* after him, to the *Exclusion* of the Line of his *Elder Brother*.

This Act of the Jews is no where condemn'd in Scripture; and evidently shews, that they thought no *hereditary Right indefeasible*. And the Reason which mov'd the People of the Jews to set *Eliakim* or *Jeboiakim* aside, and to make *Jeboahaz* King; seems plainly to have been, that *Eliakim* the *Elder Brother* was then in the Interest of *Pharaob Necho* King of *Egypt* their Enemy, [who presently after dethron'd *Jeboahaz*, and made *Eliakim* King, 2 *King*. 22. v. 34.] and was inclin'd to assist him against the *Assyrian* Power, to which the Jews were *Tributary* by solemn League and Covenant from the Time of *Ahaz*, 2 *K*. 16. 7. The breaking of which, and *rebelli*ng against the King of *Babylon*, was his Ruine, and that of his Country, 2 *Chron*. 36. 6.

From the *Nature* and *Design* of Laws, ariseth (which is the next Thing to be consider'd) the *Extent* and *Obligation* of them. All humane Laws being founded by the *Consent* of the People to be govern'd by them, either *tacit* or *express*, upon such Principles as promote the common Good; they must necessarily extend to all Things that the People have a *Right* to, or which their *Good* is any Way concern'd in, and oblige all the Members of the Society. For since it is impossible that any Government should be establish'd without Terms of Agreement which oblige the *whole*; and since the very Nature of all Government supposes that every Member of it agrees to what the *major* Part, or some *few* or *One* to whom the Management of *Public* Affairs is entrusted, shall decree in their Behalf, and for the *public* Benefit; and it being a Principle of the Law of Nature, that all Men should stand to *Covenants*; from hence ariseth the *Original Extent* and *Obligation* of all humane Laws. So that the *Obligation* of all humane Laws clearly stands in the

*Will* or original *Consent* of the People, disposing of their *Natural Rights*, and the Government of their Persons, on such Terms as they judge may preserve them best from unjust Harm and Violence.

Hence the following *Corollaries* are demonstratively deduc'd. *1<sup>st</sup>*, That all humane Laws actually in being, oblige *only* by the *Will* or *Consent* of the *present* Legislative Powers. For since it is prov'd that no Law can bind without the *Consent* of those who are to be govern'd by it; and since it is impossible that the *present* Generation should have consented to the enacting of what was actually done by those *past*; it necessarily follows, that all humane Laws now in being, either have no Force at all, which is absurd; or have Force only by the *Consent* of the *present* Legislative Powers, whose *Will* it is always presum'd to be, that all Laws made in Times past, shou'd *actually* and *at present* oblige; unless they declare the contrary, either by *expressly* repealing them, or by enacting new ones *contrary* to them, which is a *tacit* Repeal; or unless by Time and Change of Circumstances they lose their *Nature* and *End*, and so die of course; or are so useless and unprofitable, as not to be regarded by those who have the Executive Power of them.

A *Second Corollary* which immediately follows, is, that the particular Laws of one Nation cannot bind the Subjects of another; except while they are within the Limits of its Government, and actually receive the Benefit and Protection of them, and so are presum'd to give a *tacit* *Consent* unto them. Nothing but the Law of Nature in General, extends its Obligation to all Nations: and the *reveal'd* Law of God, to all such as have the Knowledge of it. But *Thirdly*,

The *Extent* and *Obligation* of humane Laws reaching over the Whole of every distinct Society, whose common and general Good is preserv'd by them; proves that no particular Part can justly pretend an Exemption



Exemption from them; or set up what they may imagine to be their *private* Rights, in Opposition to what is determin'd by the rest, or the major Part, or the *Legislative* Power. For That is a Contradiction to the very first Principles of Reason, on which all Governments by Laws are founded; which are, that the *major Part*, or those to whom the *Legislative* Power is by common Consent entrusted, must direct and give Laws to the Whole. Otherwise, if a *few* be allow'd to judge for themselves in such Matters as these, (where there is no *superiour* Obligation incumbent upon them,) in opposition to the Laws; there must be perpetual Civil Wars and Dissentions. Whence it follows from the evident Principles of Reason already laid down, that whenever it happens that the *major Part* of a Nation, or the *Legislative* Power, does any Thing that may be in the Event *grievous*, or bear hard upon the particular Rights of some others; even tho' perhaps a considerable Number; yet if this cannot easily be remedied in a *legal* manner, agreeable to the establish'd Methods of Government; it ought to be submitted to, upon this *infallible* and *never-failing Maxim*, that the *public Peace and Good* is always chiefly to be regarded and promoted; and therefore the *private Rights* of a *Part*, (whenever they happen to interfere,) must give place to them.

*Fourthly*, from the above-prov'd Premises This farther Conclusion is *irresistible*; that as no particular Persons of any Society can justly claim an Exemption from the Force of the Laws, on Pretense of any private particular *Civil Rights*; so neither can any Persons justly pretend *independent Ecclesiastical Rights*, which may interfere with the *Civil Rights* establish'd by the Laws, or which may exempt their Actions or Persons from the *Authority* of the *Civil Power*. This is evident; because, the Object of the *Civil Power* being the *public Good*, which cannot be dispens'd with in any Case; whatever tendeth to disturb or destroy



destroy that, must immediately come under the Cognizance of the Civil Power. So that, let the Matter or Action proceed from what Cause soever, whether from Opinion in Religion, or the Exercise of Spiritual Power, or whatever else; it is, so far as it truly tends to disturb or destroy the public Peace, of a Civil Nature, and may be restrain'd by the Civil Power. And tho' Religious Rights, and Spiritual Powers consequent upon them, are in their Natures different from and independent of the Civil Rights and Powers; yet the Exercise of them with respect to all Modes, Circumstances, and Rules or Canons, which are of a Civil Nature, must ever be subordinate to the just Laws of the Civil Power, never interfere with its rightful Jurisdiction; nor ever pretend to exempt the Persons, or Civil Property, either of Laity or Clergy, from the Service and Dominion of the Civil State. And where the Civil Magistrate is of the National or legally establish'd Religion, and Encouragements are annex'd to it by his Power and Bounty; it is the greatest Reason and Justice, that his Authority and Councils should preside and have the supreme Direction in, and Cognizance of, all Ecclesiastical Affairs; that so there may be a perfect Harmony, and uninterrupted Peace and Agreement betwixt Church and State.

From what has been hitherto said, the Inference is undeniable, that to imagine that an Ecclesiastical Power acting independent in all its Relations from the Civil Power, can possibly exist with it in one and the same Society, is the most wild and unreasonable Notion in the World; and it is to imagine that the same Person may lie under not only different, but contrary Obligations at the same Time. The unavoidable Consequence is, that the one must swallow up the other; and either the Ecclesiastical Power destroy the Civil, as in some Popish Countries; or the Civil Powers give Laws to the Ecclesiastical, as in all truly Protestant, and truly Christian Countries.

Thus

Thus it appears that *Religion* is, and *how* it is the Object, and within the Bounds of the *civil Power*. And as Men have a natural Right to the Profession of Religion, as well as to their Civil Liberty and Property; so they may entrust the *public ordering* of the external Circumstances of that Right, to what Hands they please. And as no Man *naturally* can have a Right to govern others in *Civil Matters*, so neither in *Religions*, without their Consent. And therefore the *Civil Power* may preside over all *Persons* and all *Things* that relate to Religion, and appoint the *Public Officers* and *Ministers* of it, and invest them with their proper Powers, and make all Rules relating to *good Order* in the *publick Administration* of it. As it is a great Mistake on one hand, to think that there are any *Civil Powers* [even that of Life and Death] which are not deriv'd from the People; so is it no less an Error on the other hand, to believe that there are any *Spiritual* or *Religious Powers*, the *Exercise* of which may not be deriv'd from them also. The Case is plain beyond Dispute, in *Natural Religion*; And it must be the same in *Reveal'd Religion* also; unless it appears that God hath *expressly* put the Delegation of *Christian Spiritual Powers* into other Hands, with strict and *absolute* Command that none but those shall ever dispense the Powers of the *Christian Religion*, and that the *Benefit* thereof shall never be convey'd thro' any other. But, I think, no one that ever read the Gospel, will or dare pretend this, so highly *dishonourable* and *opposite* to the *Excellence* and *Simplicity* of the *Christian Faith*. This would be indeed to build the Church of Christ, not upon a *Rock*, but a *Sandy Foundation*; which nothing could maintain, but the perpetual *irresistible* Concurrence of a *miraculous Power*; both to keep up every where an *uninterrupted Succession*, of one Sort of Pastors; and also always to preserve their Faith and Doctrine pure, and agreeable to the Rule of his reveal'd Will, and the *Terms* of Communion (which they may at



any Time impose, upon their own uncertain Interpretation of Scripture,) free from Superstition, and all just Suspicion of Error. But in Order to preserve, on such a Scheme, the Communion of the Church of Christ pure, and without all Mixture of Antichristian Corruption; and the Consciences of Men free from all just Scruples, and unjust Impositions; it would be necessary that God should give not only Infallibility to the Rulers of it, but also impeccable Honesty in their Decisions; that neither thro' want of Knowledge, nor Good-will, they may at any Time put the Salvation of any Member of Christ's Church into Hazard. For if either thro' Superstitious Ignorance they cannot, or, thro' Perverseness and the inordinate Love of Power and worldly Interest, they will not put the Terms of Christian Communion out of all suspicion of Error and Corruption, and found them immediately upon the express Rule of Scripture; and if, nevertheless, it be necessary to hold Communion with them, in Order to hold Communion with Christ himself, on which Salvation depends; then must Mens Salvation frequently have been unavoidably not only hazarded, but frustrated by Means of the Unchristian and Tyrannical Impositions of Ecclesiastical Rulers. Which, I think, is a Demonstration, that God and Christ have not made the Terms of Christian Salvation to depend upon any Succession of the Hierarchy, or any particular Form of Church-Government. The Truth is, [which I am bold to speak, because it is Truth;] that the Gospel hath made no Alterations in Matter of Religion, with Relation to the Civil Governours, or the Rights of the People; but what Ecclesiastical Powers they had under the Jewish or Natural Religion, they have the same under the Christian: And whatever is or can be pretended for the indefeasible Spiritual Powers of an uninterrupted Succession of Church-Rulers, they are still of a positive, unchangeable Nature: And the Church, or Body of Christian People,

People, may at any Time defend themselves against  
 Tyrannical Rulers, be they who they will, in *Spi-*  
*ritual* Affairs, as well as against those who govern  
 tyrannically in *Civil* Affairs: And it is always in  
 the *Church's* or *Christian People's* Power, [and there-  
 fore all *Spiritual* Power as well as *Civil* is founded in  
 their Consent,] to take such Methods as are *neces-*  
*sary* to the Preservation of their *Religion* against *Spi-*  
*ritual* Tyranny; and to put *Spiritual* Powers into  
 such Hands as will most effectually preserve their  
 religious Rights, and the Faith of Christ most pure  
 and uncorrupt. From which Consideration this  
 Truth necessarily ariseth, *viz.* That whatever Form  
 of Church Government is at any Time establish'd  
 upon the Right which Christians always have to  
 preserve their *Religion* and public Forms of *Worship*  
 free from the Corruptions and Impositions of ty-  
 rannical Ecclesiastical Rulers, it is agreeable to the  
 Will of God and of Christ, who have given them  
 that Right; and sufficient to convey with full *Effi-*  
*ciacy* and *Validity* all the Powers and Benefits of *Re-*  
*ligion* to the sincere Professors of it. These two  
 Considerations clearly and fully expose the *Weakness*  
 and *Fallacy* of the whole Reasonings of the Author of  
 the *Invalidity of Lay-Baptism*, throughout, on this  
 Head; who cou'd not see, that tho' an *Ecclesiastical*  
*Authority*, or *Commission*, might be *necessary* to give *Va-*  
*lidity* to Baptism, so far as it is a right to *visible*  
*Church-Communion*, [for the *Validity* of it as a Title  
 to the *covenanted* Mercies of God, cannot, I think,  
 necessarily depend on any *Authority* or *Commission*  
 whatever given by *Man*; and therefore the *Que-*  
*stion* is not rightly stated, and, being so stated, is  
 not at all prov'd by that Author;] yet it could not  
 be *absolutely necessary*, that such *Authority* or *Commis-*  
*sion* shou'd be convey'd *only* thro' *Episcopal Ordination*;  
 but that it might be *validly* and *effectually* convey'd  
*thro' the Hands* of those Church-Rulers, whoever  
 they

they are, that are settled on the *indisputable* Right of the Christian Church above-mention'd.

And tho' *Episcopacy* is indeed, and may easily be prov'd to be of *Apostolical* Institution, and is, as I verily believe, the best Form of Ecclesiastical Government, and worthy to be desir'd and fought after by all Churches; yet it is very weak from hence to argue, without any Grounds either from *Scripture* or *Reason*, or even *Ecclesiastical* Testimony, that it is *absolutely necessary* to the Being of the Christian Church; and that the *Sacraments*, and *Covenanted Mercies* of God cannot be administer'd and convey'd by any other Means; and that so the Church of Christ must entirely cease where these are not, or cannot be had; or where it may be *necessary*, in Order to preserve Religion free from *Unchristian* and *Tyrannical* Impositions, to lay these aside. That Author, in insisting thus far, not only has no Support from *Scripture*, *Reason* or *Antiquity*, but is moreover perfectly *disagreeable* to the Sentiments of the *Church of England*; whose Practice all along has shewn that it owns the *Validity* of *Baptisms* administer'd with due Matter and Form in any Communion; and also in several \* Instances hath acknowledged, and never did nor do's at this Day deny the *Validity* of *Presbyterian* Ordination in other Churches, tho' all her own Ministers are required to have *Episcopal* Ordination. I thought it needful and just to make these Remarks for the Credit and Honour of the Reformation, a great Part of which is *unchristened* by the *Uncharitable* and mistaken Zeal of many amongst us, meerly for Want of That Order which They have declared

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\* Archbishop Bancroft and other Bishops in 1616, own'd the *Validity* of *Presbyterian* Ordination, and refus'd to reordain some *Scottish* Presbyters who were then to be made Bishops; declaring, that to doubt it [the *Validity* of the Orders they had receiv'd from Presbyters] was to doubt whether there was any Lawful Vocation in most of the Reform'd Churches. See Arch-bishop Spotswood's Hist. p. 514.

† they cannot have; and which is no where *re-veal'd*, or can ever be proved to be absolutely *necessar-y* to *Christianity*; nor was ever thought so by the most *pure primitive Church*; or our own *wise Reformers*, who all along by their *Practice*, and sometimes even by *express Declarations*, shewed themselves to be of a *contrary Opinion*.

From these Considerations, two other very *ma-terial Conclusions* are deduc'd; 1<sup>st</sup>. That the *Sacer-dotal Powers* of *Excommunication*, *Absolution*, and *Benediction*, do not depend on any *Commission* given by *Christ* to *one particular Succession* of *Ministers*; as if *God* was determin'd to dispense his *Mercies* and *Judgments* according to their *Sentences* only, and had given them the *Key of David* with a *judicial Authority* to *open and shut* the *everlasting Doors* of the *Kingdom of Heaven*; and had said unto them, *He whom thou blessest, is blessed, and he whom thou cursest,*

† See the Letter of the reform'd Church of *Geneva* to the *Uni-versity of Oxford*

|| Arch bishop *Whitgift* says, that it is the *Opinion of the best Writers*, That there is no one certain Kind of *Government in the Church*, which *must* be perpetually observ'd: against *Cartwright* p. 678. And the *Judicious Hooker*, speaks the *Sense of the whole Reformation* when he says, The *Regiment* [of *Episcopacy*] is *pos-sitive*, and consequently not *absolutely necessary*, but of a *chang-able Nature*; because there is no *Divine Voice*, which in *express Words*, forbiddeth it to be chang'd. Presently after he adds, That the *Church hath Power* by *universal Consent*, upon *urgent Cause*, to take it away, if thereunto she be constrain'd thro' the *Proud, Tyrannical, and unreformable Dealings* of her *Bishops*; and concludes; Wherefore least *Bishops* forget themselves, as if none on *Earth* had *Authority* to touch their *States*, let them continually bear in *Mind*, that it is rather the *Force of Custom*, whereby the *Church* having so long found it good to continue under the *Regiment* of her *Vertuous Bishops*, doth still uphold, maintain and honour them in that *Respect*; than that any such *true and Heavenly Law* can be shew'd, by the *Evidence* whereof it may of a *Truth* appear that the *Lord* himself hath appointed *Presbyters* for ever to be under the *Regiment* of *Bishops*, in what sort soever they behave themselves. *Eccles. Pol. 7th. Book p. 380, 381*



is *curfed*. These are only the *vain Boasts* and *Terrors of Men*, by which the Church of *Rome* endeavours to frighten *weak Christians* into her *Idolatrous Communion*; and to gain *Profelytes*, that she may make them ten Times more *Children of Hell* than they were before; and by which *some*, unworthy of the Name of *Protestants*, attempt to set up a *Popish Power* in the *Protestant Church*. But *These* are the *rightful Powers* of every *Christian Society*, into whatever Hands the *Necessity* of their Circumstances and their *Right* to preserve the public *Worship of God* free from *antichristian Superstition* and corrupt *Imposition*, may have put them. And as they are *Means* of *admitting Members* into, or *excluding* them from the *Visible Communion* of the Church on the *Terms* of the *Gospel*; which seems to be the *express Scripture-Sense* of *binding and loosing, remitting and retaining Sins*; they are a proper *Branch* of the *Judicial Power* of *Ecclesiastical Rulers*. But as they relate to the *Favour of God*, and his *Covenanted Mercies* thro' *Christ*, and carry with them the *assured Title* to, or *Forfeiture* of *Salvation*; they must immediately depend upon the *Conditions of Faith and Repentance*, as required in the *Gospel*; and the *Priest* can only *declare* what *God hath done*, or is resolv'd to do according to the *Terms* of the *Covenant*: And no other *Priest*, but the *High-Priest* of our *Profession*, *Christ Jesus*, who knows the *Hearts of Men*, and the whole *Will and Mind of God*, and hath *indeed the Key of the Kingdom of Heaven*, and *opens and no Man shuts, and shuts and no Man opens*; is able *authoritatively* to pronounce the *irreversible Sentence* of *Absolution* or *Condemnation* upon *Sinners*.

To suppose that any *Priest*, or *Minister* of *Jesus Christ*, hath by *Virtue* of his *Commission* any *Authority*, properly speaking, to *bind* or *loose* the *Sins* of *Christians*, so as the *Covenanted Mercies* of *God*, and the *Eternal Salvation* of their *Souls* shall de-

pend upon it; is to suppose that God hath put everlasting Life and Death out of his own *absoloute* Disposall; and that Christ hath so far devolv'd both his *judicial* and *Mediatorial* Office out of his own most *righteous* and *infallible* Hands, into those of *weak, fallible, passionate* and *sinful Men*; or that he hath bound himself not to exercise them *exclusive* of the *Concurrence* of their *Authority*. For 'tis an evident Truth founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, that Whatever is *effected* by the *Authority* of any *Commission*, must be *void* and *without effect*, where such an *Authority* is not apply'd: Therefore if the *Salvation* and *Condemnation* of Christians are *effected* by the *Authority* of the *Sentence* of the *Priests*, or cannot be *effected* without it; then is That *Sentence* a *necessary* Term or *Condition* of the *Pardon* and *Reprobation* of them; and God must have oblig'd himself in the *Gospel-Covenant*, to hold his Hand; and to stop all *Pardons* and *Condemnations* from going out, till the *Priest* hath pronounc'd his *authoritative* and *judicial* *Sentence*: So that Christ hath neither Power from God to pass Judgment upon *wilful* and *obstinate* Offenders against his Law, nor can his *Intercession* at God's right Hand avail for the *Pardon* of *sincere* Penitents, and faithful Believers, without the *Interposition* of the *Priestly Authority* on Earth to ratify his *Sentence* in Heaven. And the *Sinner* that has the good Fortune to escape the *Judgement* of the *Priest*, is sure to escape the *Judgement* of God denunc'd in the *Gospel*; and *Hypocrites*, whom our Lord has threaten'd to cut asunder, *Matt. 24. 51*, will certainly escape both the *Edges* of his *Sword*, *Rev. 1. 16*, and have the best *Portion* of Sinners: and on the other Hand, the *sincere* Christian, who has liv'd in the constant *Fear* of God and walk'd in all the *Commandments* of the Lord blameless, *Luk. 1. 6*, if he dies without the *Priestly Absolution* and *Benediction*, must fall short of the *great Blessings* and *Mercies* of the *Christian Covenant*.



Covenant, and have his *Lot* amongst *sincere Infidels* only. But if it cannot be said without the greatest *Blasphemy*, that God and Christ cannot and do not condemn *wilful* and *impenitent* Sinners without the Priest's *Concurrence*, or staying for his *judicial Sentence*; it cannot be said without equal *Blasphemy*, that they cannot and do not *absolve* Sinners upon their sincere *Conversion*, without such *Concurrence* also. For it is plainly equally agreeable to the *Justice* and *Mercy* of God, not to *Condemn*, as not to *Pardon*, without the Interposition of his Sentence: And no Reason can be given, according to the *Gospel-Terms*, why *wilful* Error and *Impenitency* should be *alone* sufficient to exclude from the Favour of God and eternal Happiness, without the Sentence of the Priest to *bind their Sins*; and yet that *true Faith* and *Reformation of Life*, should not be also *alone* sufficient to *reconcile* Men unto God thro' Christ's *Intercession*, and to receive them into his Glory, without their *loosing* or *Absolution*. But if in both Cases these are *alone* sufficient, and have their immediate Effects without the *Co-operation* of the Priestly Sentence; then hath no Priest any proper *Authority* in those Matters, which no ways depend upon, or are *effected* by it. And therefore if every Priest *was* really *infallible* and could not err in pronouncing Sentence of *Absolution* or *Excommunication*; it would still be only a *certain Declaration* of what God had already done; and could have no *real Authority* in it. So that all that can possibly be meant, consistent with *Reason* and *Religion*, by the *Authority* of the *Sacerdotal Commission* in these Affairs of Mens eternal Salvation, is, that every Priest by his *Ecclesiastical Commission*, as a *public Minister* of the Gospel, hath Power or *Authority* to *declare* in a *public Manner* to the Assembly of Christian People, what God thro' Christ hath *promis'd* or *threatned*, and will certainly *perform* and *execute* upon the *Conditions* of the Christian Covenant, which

are

are declared to be no other than *Faith* and *Repentance*. And as no *sensible* and *reasonable* Man ever did or will deny this *Power* or *Authority* to the *Christian Priesthood*; so whoever at any *Time* shall claim more, does with the greatest *Blasphemy* and *Profaneness* usurp the *Prerogative* of *Christ*, and place himself in his and *God's* stead; and whoever depends upon such *pretended* Authority for *Salvation*, puts his *Trust* in the *Arm of Flesh*, and in effect makes *Man* his *Master*, *Father*, *Judge* and *Saviour*.

2dly, From the *true* Rights of the *Church of Christ* it clearly follows, That the *Unity* of the *Church* so much insisted on in *Scripture*, is not founded in an *inviolable* Adherence to an *uninterrupted* Succession of *Episcopal* Rulers, which is impossible to be certainly proved *that it is*, or *where it is*, and from which it may be necessary, as I have proved, to depart: but in adhering to *Christ himself* the *Head*, by a *sound* and *lively* Faith, and owning all who do so, according to the *indispensable* Rule of *Gospel-Charity* and *Brotherly Love*, to be Members of his *Mystical Body*. So that there may possibly be a *Separation* from *Episcopacy*, without a *Schism* in the *Catholic Church*, as well as *with* it; and *Christian* Communion may be maintained amongst those who have different *Forms* of *Church-Government*. And if, instead of endeavouring to *impose* upon, *unchristen*, *curse*, and *damn* each other, we studied *Union* and *Reconciliation* by *Christian* Methods, and owned each other as *Christian* Brethren; the *Consequence* we might justly hope would be, to see a *speedy* End of our *unchristian* Animosities and *Divisions*, Abundance of *Peace* and *mutual Forbearance*. And if the *different* Measure of *Light*, and *Spiritual Understanding*, which *God* hath given, would not suffer us wholly to *unite* in one *visible constant* Communion of the *Church militant on Earth*; yet *reciprocal Love* and *Charity*, and the same *Christian* Affections one towards another, would certainly *unite* us by the  
Bond

*Bond of the same Spirit from whom these Graces flow, in the invisible Communion and Fellowship of the Saints, and Christ the Head of the Church Triumphant in Heaven.*

But Fifthly; As humane Civil Laws extend to all Persons and all Things, that may promote the public Good; so they do not extend in Matters of Religion farther, than amongst those who are agreed with the Civil Governors in the same Religion and Way of Worship. The Reason is plain: Men's Natural Rights to Civil Liberty and Property, which chiefly regard the external Actions, are the same in Kind amongst all Men; and so the same Laws, with respect to them, equally extend to the Advantage and Good of all; and the public Peace cannot be secur'd, unless all are oblig'd by them. But Men's Religious Rights, whether Natural or Supernatural, are of different kinds, depending upon the inward Perswasion of the Mind concerning God, and the most pure and acceptable Manner of serving and worshipping him; which is very different in Mankind, and cannot be brought under one Law: And the true unpretended Rights of Religion, can never interfere or be inconsistent with the Right of others, whether religious or civil, or hurt the public Peace or Good; and are, as I observ'd, in their Nature, entirely independent of all Civil Government. And tho' Men may justly and in Duty consent in matter of Action relating to civil Liberty or Property, to remit something of their Right, or suffer Loss for the public Good and Peace; yet in Matters of Opinion, and inward Perswasion of Mind, they can never possibly on any Account lawfully comply with, or agree to any Thing, that is contrary to their Judgment; *i. e.* they cannot be oblig'd to profess as Truth, what they believe to be a wrong Faith, or false Doctrine; or to submit their Consciences to any Ruler but God and their own Reason. So that tho' the Profession of Religion in general, or the owning

owning and worshipping of God, and the Perform-  
 ance of virtuous and moral Actions, be the supreme  
 Civil Magistrate's principal Care and Concern,  
 without which no Society can be safe or happy ;  
 yet the particular *Modes* of Religion, whether *Natural*,  
*Jewish*, or *Chriftian*, or any of the Divisions or those  
*Modes*, may be entirely exempt from his Jurisdi-  
 ction. And that he gives any Direction in the various  
*Forms* of religious Worship, is merely *accidental*, and  
 no way *essential* to the *Civil* Authority with which he  
 is entrusted ; and properly belongs to him, only  
 with respect to those, with whom he professeth the  
*same* Religion. As every Man lies under the in-  
 dispensable Obligation of worshipping God after  
 that manner which he conceives to be most agree-  
 able to the Divine Will ; so he can neither give,  
 nor can another usurp any Authority over his Con-  
 science in this Matter : And when a Number or  
 Part of a politic Society are like-minded in Mat-  
 ters of Religion, they have a *natural, unrestrainable*  
 Right to exercise all the Acts of it in That Way  
 which they think most conducing to the *Honour of*  
*God*, and their own *Spiritual Good* ; provided they  
 do hereby no *Injury* to the rest of the Society, who  
 are entitled to the same Rights. And indeed ; not  
 to suppose and allow that the particular *Modes* of  
 Religion are *in themselves* as to all Civil Power *in-*  
*different*, and entirely *independent* ; would be to de-  
 prive Men of the most valuable *Liberty*, that of  
*Conscience*, in Things of the greatest Concern to  
 them ; and subject their *Souls* to a most insupport-  
 able *Slavery*. 'Tis therefore plain and unquestion-  
 able, that Spiritual Rights, whether concerning  
*Opinions* or *Actions*, *internal* or *external* Modes of  
 Worship, made known to a Man either by the *na-*  
*tural* Light of Reason, or the *reveal'd* Will of God,  
 are his *unalienable Property*, and not subject to the  
*Civil Magistrate's* Dominion, any farther than as  
*they may be attended* with any Circumstances  
 which

which may invade or encroach upon his Civil Rights; or the Public Good. So that a *free Toleration*, and open Exercise of Religion, in that Way which Men think most pleasing to God, and to promote best their own Salvation, is to be allowed to all; and no Law can ever justly be made in *Prohibition* of it. Hence it is prov'd that all *Pœnal Laws* made against any particular *Opinions* or *Doctrines* of any Religion, that have no Influence on the Public Peace or Good, are *unjust* in their own Natures, and can have no Force; or ever oblige the Judges of them, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, to put them in Execution. The Reason is most evident, from what has been already said. The Law of *Man* is only Judge of *Principles*, *Words*, and *Actions*, relating to the Public Good. Therefore let any Opinions or Doctrines in Religion seem ever so *wrong*, or to be attended with ever so absurd and unreasonable Consequences, yet if they have no *direct* and *immediate* Tendency to *disturb* or *destroy* the Public Peace, they lie not before *Man's*, but only *God's* Tribunal, who alone knows the *Heart*; and the *Sincerity* of Men's Consciences, to whom therefore *only* they are to give an Account of them. Hence; tho' any Body of Men [who are all alike *fallible*] was really *infallible* in Matters of Religion, yet they could not, unless they could convince others that they were so, have any Right to *impose* their Opinions on them, or to *judge* those who differed from them. So that *Persecution* in Matters of Religion, is a certain Mark of *Antichrist*, and directly opposite to Him who rebuked his own Disciples for desiring Leave to call *Fire* (even) *from Heaven*, to consume the *schismatical Samaritans*; and told them that he *came not to destroy Men's Lives; but to save them*, Luke 9. 54, 55, 56.

That therefore the public Profession of Religion, and the Worship of God, is *Man's just* and *unalienable* Right, and can never possibly in its own Nature interfere with the just Rights of Civil Government;

and that no Man can have a Right to make Laws for Others in Matters of *mere Religion*, or to punish another for non-Compliance in any Point of *mere Religion and Conscience*; is evidently agreeable, not only to the State of *Natural Religion*, but also to the *Christian Revelation*; wherein Christ, the *great Revealer of God's Will*, hath established his Religion on such Doctrines and Duties, the sincere Profession and Exercise of which, can never be inconsistent with the Civil Power or the Public Good of Mankind, but tend highly to advance the *Authority* of the one, and the *Happiness* of the other; and in enforcing Obedience to his Gospel, hath thought fit to appoint no *Penalties* to the Rejectors or Transgressors of his Laws, but the *spiritual and invisible Terrors* of a *future State*; and no other *Encouragements* to the sincere Professors and Observers of them, than the Joys and Happiness of the *other World*. And, no doubt, the true Reason of establishing his Laws in this manner, was; that, requiring *internal Sincerity*, and the Obedience of the *Heart and Conscience*, as *only acceptable to God*; he saw that *Temporal Rewards and Punishments* could have no Effect or Influence upon these; but on the contrary, that so far as *Worldly Motives and Temptations* prevailed upon Men's Minds, and were the Springs and Causes of their *outward Profession of Religion*, so much less could the *Love of God*, and *Fear of offending him*, which is the only Foundation of all true Religion, prevail to the *sincere Worship of him in Spirit and in Truth*. And he also saw, that the *Countenance or Terrors of Men*, which are *visible and present*, if applied to his Religion, tho' they might influence the *external Profession* more than the *Terrors or Rewards of the Lord*, which are *invisible and future*; yet they could never *convince the Understanding*, and rule the *Heart*, and so lead Men to the Truth with *Sincerity*; and that, in Consequence, Men might be *Hypocrites and Dissemblers with God*, and so subject themselves to his

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his Displeasure, under the Profession of the *true* as well as a *false* Religion. Therefore since the Profession of Christianity is absolutely in its own Nature *independent* of all Civil Government, and can never interfere with the Exercise of any rightful Powers of it; no *Human* Authority whatsoever can have a Right to make Laws of *Religion and Conscience* for the Christian State, or to enforce Subjection and Obedience to those which Christ has made, by any other *Motives, Rewards or Punishments*, than he himself hath annexed to them. This would be evidently, not only to invade his Kingdom, but to call in question his Divine *Wisdom*, as if he knew not what Arguments were most likely to prevail with Men to receive, and what Sanctions were most proper to secure Obedience to his Laws. Hence it appears how contrary both to Reason and the express Will of Christ it is, for any *Human* Power to endeavour by *Temporal* Rewards and Punishments to compel Men to the Profession of even the *true Religion*; as if Obedience to God by Religion, was, like that to the Civil Magistrate, only the Consent in *outward* Action and Behaviour. The Ends of *Human* Laws are indeed fulfilled by Men's outward actual Compliance to the Injunctions of them; and therefore *Temporal* Rewards and Punishments are suitable *Means and Motives* to these Ends: But the End of true Religion, or of the *Divine* Laws of the Gospel, being Obedience to God in *Sincerity of Heart and Conscience*, on a thorow Persuasion of the Truth of them; this can never be effected by mere external Actions, or by any other Motives or Considerations, than what can immediately be applied to the *Conviction* of the *Understanding*: To which since no *Human* Power can ever reach, it is not only *impious*, but *unreasonable*, to make *Pœnal* Laws in Matters of *pure* Religion; the Execution of which may make many *Hypocrites*, and ruin the *Souls* of many, who might otherwise be saved in the *sincere* Profession of even many

Errors ; and tends also to confirm the *Prejudices* of others against Truth, who were ready to have been brought over to it by the *Human* and *Christian* Motives of Reason and Argument ; but can never possibly bring *Honour* or *Encrease* to the *true Religion*, or make one *sincere* Follower of Christ.

But still more particularly to observe what I have all along hinted in this Argument: Tho' *Toleration* in the Profession of Religion be a *natural* Right common to all Mankind, and such as no Man can either give up to, or lawfully restrain in another ; yet no *Toleration* can be pleaded in Favour of those, who profess to hold any Opinions, or teach any Doctrines, or do, in Consequence of such Doctrines, any thing inconsistent with *other Men's Rights*, whether Religious or Civil, or the Public Good. For tho' we may not judge of *other Men's Sincerity of Heart*, or their meer inward Sentiments ; yet we may judge when *our own Rights* are invaded, (as they may be) by any *professed Principles, Words or Actions* ; and may defend our selves against them, let them proceed from what Cause soever ; tho' it be a *Zeal* for what others may think *Truth*, or for the Glory of God. Nay, even the *Sincerity* of no Man's *Principles ; Words or Actions*, [howsoever it may excuse them in the Sight of God,] can excuse them to *Man*, when they become *injurious* to him.

For this reason, *Atheists* have no Right to be *tolerated* in any Nation, being by their Principles Enemies to all Mankind ; and *Papists* have *less* Right to be *Tolerated* in any *Protestant* Nation, as being by their Principles not only *permitted*, but *obliged* to be *Traitors* to all *Protestant* Governments, and bound in Conscience, when ever it is in their Power, for the Good of the *Church*, to destroy them. We of this Nation have all along, ever since the *Reformation*, had Experience, and of late a fresh Instance of this Truth.



Truth. And tho' indeed it is true [as an ingenious and honest Gentleman has lately † observed,] that Punishments have no immediate or direct *Tendency* to convince the Minds of *Atheists*, and he might have added *Papists*; yet (I apprehend) it is a *Mistake* to think that they may not be justly punish'd for their *profess'd Principles*, or rather indeed *Want of Religion*; (because *Civil Punishments* are not intended, [as he seems to think,] to convince the *Understanding*, but to secure and preserve the *Rights* of Others whether *Religious* or *Civil*, and the *public Peace* and *Good*, which are openly invaded and disturb'd by such *Principles*;) Whose *Infidelity* takes off from the *One*, all *Obligation of doing what is Right*; and whose *Bigottry* and *Superstition* lays upon the *Other*, the *strongest Obligations of doing the greatest Wrongs*; He that shall declare that there is no such Thing as *Morality* or *Property*, and that by *Consequence* all *Actions* are in themselves *indifferent*; and that no *Obligation* lies upon him either from *Religion*, or giving his *Word*, or *Promise*, or *Oath*, or entering into any *Kind of Covenant*, to preserve the *Lives* or *Possessions* of others; such *Errors* as these, which proceed from *Atheism*, and still more from *Popery*, necessarily lead, and would *infallibly* cause Men to invade in *Practice* the *Rights* and *Properties* of others, whenever they found any *Interest*, *Satisfaction*, or *Advantage* in so doing; and do evidently in their *Nature* disturb the *Peace* of all *Societies*. And therefore Persons professing such *Principles*, which necessarily lead to *Practices* hurtful to the *Rights* of others, can have no *Right* to be *tolerated* or *protected* by any *Government*. The *Obligation* to any *Allegiance* or *Submission* to which, they *deny* in the *one Case*: and to *destroy* it, whenever it is in their *Power*, they *profess* in the *other Case*.

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† *Mr. Chubb's Enquiry concerning Property*, p. 19, 20.

Having been thus large, upon Account of the Importance of the Subject, in proving the *Reasonableness* of *Toleration* in Matters of Religion, such as interferes not with the *true* Interests or *Rights* of the *Civil State* ; it will not be amiss briefly to touch the Mischiefs and ill Consequences following the Refusal of it.

The immediate ill Consequence which appears, is, that it contracts the Affections of the Subjects, and by Consequence weakens the Hands and Power of a Government. When Men are deny'd the Countenance and Favours of a Government, and it may be punish'd with Civil Penalties, merely for non-compliance in Matters of Religion against their Consciences ; it presently and naturally raises Uneasiness, hard Thoughts, and Disaffection. They care not how little they serve its Interests, when no Reward or Protection is to be expected from it ; and so it casts a Damp upon *Trade* and *Industry* : And if it happens (as it *generally* does, when once Persecution is begun,) that thro' the Means of *Uncharitable* and *Superstitious* Governours, the Laws are *very severe*, and often put in Execution ; it throws all Things into a Ferment, and there is great Danger of *Civil War* and Confusion. How many Nations have been even *depopulated*, when the *Unchristian* Fury of persecuting Princes hath prevail'd ? and how much Blood of *Loyal* Subjects hath been *basely* spilt, by *Religious Massacres* ? And on the other Hand, have not some Princes justly lost their Crowns, by their *injurious* and *outrageous* Invasion of their People's *religious Rights* ? But blessed be God ! and *glorious* and *immortal* be the *Memory* of the *Revolution* ! by which the *String* of *Persecution* was drawn out of this Nation, and (I hope) the Name of it will be no more heard amongst us ! And as *Persecution* is most *opposite* to the *best Policy*, as well as the *best Religion* ; so 'tis most *agreeable* to both, that all those who are equally serviceable to any Government,

vernment, should be equally entitled to the Favours of it.

I come now to consider the Particular *Nature, Design, Extent, and Obligation* of *Ecclesiastical Laws*; which I shall only take Notice of with Regard to the State of the *Christian Religion*.

The *Nature or Grounds* of *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Laws, are much the same, both in *Substance* and *Modes*; the Substance of *Civil* Laws being founded in Principles of *Natural Reason*, and that of *Christian Ecclesiastical* Laws on the Principles of God's *reveald* Will; which is the Law of Nature improv'd and perfected with some *additional* and *positive* Injunctions of Practices and Doctrines of *Faith*, superadded, and most agreeable to it. The *Modes* or Circumstances of Both, have exactly the *same* Foundation, *viz.* the Will and Judgment of the public Rulers, ordering such decent Rites and Ceremonies as properly attend the public Profession and Execution of them. But the great Difference betwixt *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Laws, is this; *viz.* That as the Laws of the *civil* State are most *imperfect* at first, and continually improve and grow more perfect by Time, and by the Experience of the Necessities and Benefits of the Public, which gives continual Occasion to the Exercise of the *Civil* Power in making *new* Laws; and also are necessarily *changeable*, both by reason of the *Ignorance* and *Infirmities* of those who make them, who are not alwayes *able*, or do not always *endeavour* to provide what is best and fittest for the *Whole*; and also by Change of Circumstances, which gives Occasion to the repealing of *Old* Laws: On the contrary, the Laws of the *Christian* State are *perfect* at first, being enacted by an *allwise* *infallible* Authority; and so are neither capable of *Addition* or *Diminution*, by Time or Change of Circumstances; and the *Gospel* is, at all Times, and in all Places, the great *Statute-Book* which contains the *irrepealable* Laws of Christianity. So that the Exercise of Power *properly Ecclesiastical*, only con-

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cerns the appointing of *public Ministers*; making *Rules* or *Canons* for their *Qualifications* and *Behaviour*, and instituting the *Forms* and decent and orderly *Manner* of *public Worship*; the admitting all such into *Communion*; as are qualify'd by the Gospel; and rejecting from *Communion* such as will not submit to the Law of Christ either in Point of *Faith* or *Practice*; clearly express'd in the Gospel.

Hence it appears, *First*, that no *Christian Church*, or *Christian Ecclesiastical Governours*, have any Power or *Right* to impose upon any Person, any *Doctrine* as a *Part* of *Christianity*, or as *necessary* to *Salvation*, which is not *clearly* and *expressly* contain'd and *declared to be necessary* in the Gospel. This is evident, because the Gospel is the *unalterable Rule* of *Christian Faith*, and therefore most *clearly* contains all that is *necessary* for a *Christian* to believe; otherwise That can be no *Rule*, whose *Directions*, necessary to the *End* of its being a *Rule*, are not *plain*, *clear* and *express*: And if it be a *Rule*, 'tis an express *Contradiction* to suppose that any *Doctrine* not *clearly* contain'd in it, can be *necessary* to *Salvation*, which is the only *End* of the *Rule*. The Learned Mr. *Thorndike* delivers a very *inconsiderate* and *dangerous* *Doctrine* upon this Head; when he says, [*Weights and Measures*, Ch. 6. P. 36.] *Therefore, neither is Christianity clearly deliver'd by the Gospels: And presently after; Therefore, neither are the Apostle's Writings clear in Things necessary to Salvation, but supposing the Knowledge of That Christianity, [by Tradition, he means, which is a very uncertain Rule,] whereby we are Sav'd; And asks, What Mark is there extant in the Scripture, to distinguish That which is necessary to Salvation, from that which is not? As if the Scriptures were not a clearer Rule to explain themselves by in Things necessary to Salvation, than Tradition, which is not only not infallible, but is corrupted, and frequently contradicts it self in delivering Doctrines of very great Moment: And as if this certain and only Mark to distinguish Things necessary,*  
from

from Things *Unnecessary* to Salvation, was not, that the former are *clearly, expressly, and indisputably*, not only contain'd in the *Scriptures*, but also clearly declar'd therein to be the *Terms of Salvation*, and may easily be understood by all who *diligently and sincerely search the Scriptures only*; And that the *Latter*, either are not reveal'd at all, or not *clearly, expressly, and indisputably* revealed; or at least not revealed as the *Terms of Salvation*: and therefore Men ought not to *impose* any such Doctrines on one another; and may differ about them without any Hazard of Salvation on either Side.

*Secondly*, It follows, that all Persons who acknowledge the *Gospel* to be the *Rule* of their *Faith*, and oblige themselves to live according to it, have a Right to *Christian Communion*, and to be admitted as *visible* Members of the Church of Christ; and therefore no Doctrine can be justly impos'd as a *Term of Communion*, which is not also *clearly* contain'd in the *Scriptures*, and therein too as a *necessary Part* of Christianity. For this is again to deny the *Gospel* to be the *Rule of Christianity*, by denying it to be the *Rule of Christian Communion*, which Christianity was design'd to establish. And since all are entitled to *Christian Communion*, that are entitled to *Christian Salvation*; and since all are entitled to *Christian Salvation*, that believe *expressly* or *implicitly* all the *Doctrines* contain'd in the *Scriptures*, making them the *Rule* of their *Faith* and *Practice*; 'tis evident that no Doctrine ought to be a *Term of Christian Communion*, that is not also a *Term of Christian Salvation*. And therefore any Doctrine, however *true* in itself, yet if not prov'd to be *clearly* and *expressly* contain'd in the *Gospel*, and That too as a *Part* of Christ's Religion, ought not to be impos'd as a *Term of Christian Communion*: And whoever insist to *impose* any such Doctrine, are *Schismatical*, and must be answerable for the Breach of *Christian Peace* and *Unity*, which it may occasion.

To assert a Right in any *Church* or *Ecclesiastical State* to make any Doctrine an Article of *Faith*, or Term of *Communion*, that Christ himself hath not expressly made so; and to bind it [under the Notion of *Interpretation* of Scripture, or any other Pretence whatsoever,] upon the *Consciences* of Christians, as a *Law of Christianity*, with the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments; is equally absurd, and attended with equal mischievous Consequences to Religion, as it would be to any *Civil State* to assert to the *Subordinate* or *Executive Power* of it a Right to enact *new Laws* and Terms of Civil Allegiance, or so to dispense with the standing Laws already made with the Consent of the Subject, as to oblige the Subject to Submit to the *Explanation* it should at any Time give, as the *unalterable* Sense and Meaning of the *Law*; and to be ruled by them, without, having Power to appeal either to the *Legislators* themselves for the *true* Sense, or to the plain and *express* Words and meaning of the *Law* it self; and to be punish'd for Disobedience to those *Interpretations*, as if it was for Breach of the *Law* it self. As such a Power granted to, or assum'd by any *Civil Governour*, who had only the *Executive Power* of the *Laws*, would presently make the *Laws* themselves of no Use; but instead thereof his own *Interpretation* would become the *Law*; and so he would rule as *arbitrarily* as if there was no *Law* to limit or controul his Power; and the *Liberties* and *Properties* of the Subject would be in as much Danger, as if there was no *Law* to protect and secure them: So a like Power invested in the Governours of the *Church*, who are only *subordinate* Powers and *Executors* of the *Law* of Christ, who is gone to Heaven and hath left his *Gospel* as the *express* and *only* Rule of *Conscience* and *Allegiance* to him, and the only Term of *Communion* and *Fellowship* with him, enforc'd with such Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments as he thought most proper to propose to the Subjects of his Kingdom;

dom ; I say, a like Power in Men to interpret be their *fallible* Sense, this *infallible* Law ; without being either able to appeal to the *Legislator* himself, or permitting his Subjects to appeal to the *express* Words and *plain* Meaning of his Law ; and to oblige them to submit to *their* Interpretations either in Point of *Faith*, *Worship*, or *Religious Practi ce*, as to the *Law of Christ* ; and to punish them with the Loss of all *Christian* Privileges, for refusing to be rul'd by *Them* as by the *Law of Christ* . What is this, but to arrogate a Power of enacting *new Laws* for Christ's Subjects ; to be as arbitrary in *Christ's* Kingdom, as if it was *their own* ; and to Tyrannize over the *Faith* and *Liberty* of Christians as much, as if they had no other *Master*, and were accountable to no other *Lord* ; or as if Christ the Son of God had never come and made them *free* Denizens of his Kingdom ?

Again, as the Exercise of such a Power over the Laws of a *State*, commonly ends either in *Tyranny* and *Oppression*, and openly setting the Laws aside, and ruling at *meer Will and Pleasure* ; or else in *Rebellion*, and the Destruction of the Governours, and Setting up a *New Kingdom* : so in the *Church*, it is the great Inlet to *Errors* and *Superstitions* ; and either ends in *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*, and substituting *human* Doctrines in Order to promote *Worldly Power* and *Interest*, instead of the Truth of Christ in order to promote the *Glory* of God and the eternal *Salvation* of the Souls of Men ; or else it occasions a Breach of *Union*, and setting up separate *Communi ons*, and laying the Foundation of irreconcilable Divisions and Animosities, to the Destruction of all *Christian Peace and Charity* . And as the *Gospel* is the *only* Rule of *Christian Faith* ; and no Truth, depending upon *Revelation*, can ever *certainly* be known, which is not *clearly* express'd in it ; and so no *humane* Authority can ever be sufficient to make or establish an *Article of Faith*, or oblige Men's Consciences to

receive for Matter of Belief what it shall enjoyn on its own *neer Authority*, without an *express Appeal* to the plain Sense and Words of the Scriptures themselves: So the same Gospel is also the *only Rule* of Christian *Communion* and *Worship*. And as we can never be sure of holding a *Faith* acceptable to God, but by keeping strictly to the Rule of Scripture, wherein it was *once deliver'd to the Saints*; so we can never be sure of performing Christian *Worship* acceptable unto him in any other Manner, than Christ has prescrib'd in the Gospel. As it is no Commendation to our Faith, to believe more than the Word of God hath reveal'd; so it is no *Honour* to God or Christ, to *worship* them in any other *Form*, than is expressly prescrib'd in Scripture, and was practis'd by the Apostles. As God is most highly glorify'd by Christ in the Gospel-Dispensation, so we can never justly think to glorify him more by a *Worship* that he has *not commanded*. As therefore no *disputable Opinions*, or *Doctrines* not *clearly deliver'd* in Scripture, ought *ever* to be inserted into *Creeeds*, lest we *believe we know not what*; so ought they much less to come into the Forms of public *Worship*, lest we *worship we know not what*. While we are pretending to be *Wise above what is written*, and vainly thinking to give God or Christ *more or different Honour* than they have *expressly requir'd* at our Hands, we may be in danger of coming short of a *true Gospel-Faith*, and of offering up our Prayers to a wrong Object, and making our *Worship* *superstitious* and *immoral*. Undoubtedly the *Scriptures* afford complete Matter for *Faith* and *Worship*; and no controversial Opinions whatsoever, ought to be mixed with what is *unquestionably true* and *holy*, with the great and plain Doctrines and Duties of the Gospel; but should always be left for the Subject of Men's *private Studies* and Enquiries. What Confusion in the *Christian Faith* and *Worship* hath the *Church of Rome* introduced, by departing from the  
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Rule of Scripture, and setting up *Human Authority* for a *Judge* in Matters of Religion? And almost all the *Schisms* that ever happened in the Church, have been owing to Men's imposing upon one another, for *Articles of Faith*, and *Terms of Communion*, their own *weak*, and oft-times *passionate* and *uncharitable* Decisions, under the commanding Term of *necessary* Truths; and pretending that *Christ* hath spoken, what was only the Voice of *Human Sense* and *fallible* Judgment. If we examine into *Ecclesiastical Power*, as exercised by the Church immediately after the Times of the *Apostles*, we shall find that the *Terms of Baptism* were the *only* Terms of *Communion*; and nothing more was required to *continue*, than to *make* Men Members of the Church. The *Creed* they enjoined, was nothing but an uncontroverted *Paraphrase* upon the *Form of Baptism* taken *expressly* out of the Scriptures; and they never imposed upon either *Clergy* or *Laiety* any other Terms of *Communion*; And always took Care that their public Forms of *Worship* were clearly and without all Dispute agreeable to Scripture. Nothing *dubious*, nothing of *disputable* Doctrine, occurred in them; but all their *Prayers*, *Blessings*, and *Doxologies*, began and ended exactly agreeable to the *Forms* and *express Directions* of *Christ* himself and his *Apostles* recorded in Scripture; as appears from the most ancient Liturgies. And when ever any *Heresies* arose, they never alter'd thereupon their *One* *Baptismal Creed*, [esteeming it always unlawful to *add to*, or *diminish* one Tittle from the *Rule of Faith* which was delivered to them,] nor their public *Prayers*; but contented themselves to confute them by their *Preaching* and *Writings*. Thus the *Peace* of the Church continued unmolested amidst all the Storms of *Persecution*, for the *First* and almost *Second* Centuries. But in the *Third* Century, when Men had begun to impose their *human*, *fallible*, and *passionate* Decisions upon one another; the *Western Church* imposing their Time of keeping *Ea-*  
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*ster upon the Eastern, contrary to the most ancient Custom, and excommunicating them for non Compliance ; and afterwards the Churches of Africa and the East contending with the Western with great Animosity, and grievously calumniating each other for Difference of Sentiments about the Baptism of Heretics, neither Side being yet able to produce the Evidence of Scripture for themselves ; that mutual Love and Charity, with which the Churches had embrac'd each other in such eminent manner from the Times of the Apostles, began to cool and languish. And at last, in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, Churches imposing upon one another, even by the Force of the Temporal Sword, their own uncertain, Philosophical Notions, as Articles of Faith, under Pretence of explaining Scripture, and obviating heretical Opinions ; and not being contented with that Measure of Faith, which had ever been sufficient for the Church from the beginning ; and refusing to keep within the Bounds which the Holy Ghost had set ; and after they had once begun, finding no End of making new Creeds, and enlarging the old ones ; anathematizing, excommunicating, and even banishing one another by Turns, for not subscribing to the Words of Men, as to the Words of God ; all Peace and Charity entirely vanished, never to be recalled ; and the State became involved in the Confusion of the Church, till both being over-run by a barbarous People, the Apostate and Tyrannical Church of Rome rose like the great Dragon from the bottomless Pit, out of this Chaos of Ruin and Desolation. Then this Man of Sin sat in the Temple of God, shewing himself as God ; erecting a cruel and Antichristian Tyranny over the Souls of the free-born Subjects of Christ, and pouring forth Death and Destruction upon all who refused to submit to his Yoke. More new Articles of Faith, new Doctrines of Worship were introduced, and almost a new Gospel imposed, under the Notion of an authoritative and infallible Explanation of the old ; till*

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at length the Church of Christ became a *Den of Thieves*, over-run with *Heathenish Superstition*; and more *Worship* was paid to numberless imaginary Saints, than to the One God and Father of all, and to Jesus Christ the One *Mediator*: And that pure Religion which came from *Heaven*, was made the Instrument of an Earthly and *wicked Policy*. After this Worldly Empire had stood more than a *Thousand Tears*, treading under Foot the Laws of Christ, and tyrannizing over the *Souls* of his Subjects; Christianity was again in a good Degree restored, thro' the shedding of much *Christian Blood*, at the *Protestant Reformation*; and the Right of the Scriptures again asserted, and *they* declared to be the *only Law and Rule* of all Christians. Upon this *Foundation* [blessed be God!] we yet stand; and, I hope, shall resolve not to weaken it by Mixtures of *Human Doctrines* and Impositions. We have seen, and do see, how *fatal* to Religion, in the *Church of Rome*, is *Human Authority* in Matters of Faith; and on the contrary how *pure* and undefiled Religion was in those first Ages, which contended for no other *Faith and Worship* than was *expressly* delivered and commanded in the Gospel. And what Power can Men have *now*, that they had not *then*? or what Doctrines and Interpretations of Scripture can *now* have *Authority*, or Right to be *imposed*, that had not *then*? or what Decisions of *Human Councils* can have Virtue and Efficacy to preserve the *Sincere* and Christian *Peace* of the Church, and the *Faith* of Christians pure and undefiled, *more* than or *besides* the Decisions of Christ himself, and his Holy Spirit *in* and *by* the Apostles? It must therefore be in vain to seek and contend for *Human* and *fallible* Authority to determine those Things, for which no less than *Divine* Wisdom is sufficient. And since Christ hath not been wanting in making known to all, every *Doctrine* that was *necessary* to render the *Faith* and *Worship* of his Disciples perfect and acceptable to  
 God;

God ; any *Alteration* or *Addition* to the *Form* of his Laws in these Essentials, must needs be an assuming an unwarranted Power, an impeaching his *Wisdom*, and a derogating from his *Authority*, and erecting an *Human* Empire within his Kingdom, and sharing Dominion with him over the *Hearts* and *Consciences* of Men.

From what has been said, I shall endeavour to demonstrate the *true Authority* of the Church in Matters of Religion, and draw two or three important Conclusions from it. The Church is a *Spiritual* Kingdom, wherein Christ rules over the Souls of Men by the Laws of the Gospel. These Laws which immediately concern this Kingdom, being enacted by an *all-wise* and *infallible* Legislator, cannot in the *first* place be *defective* in any thing *necessary* to the End for which they were made, *viz.* the procuring the Salvation of Men's Souls by an entire and perfect Obedience to the whole Will of God. Hence it follows that they are absolutely incapable of *Alteration* or *Addition* by any *Human* Authority whatsoever. *Secondly*, Those Laws, to which Christ has commanded Obedience in order to Salvation, cannot but be delivered in *clear* and *express* Terms ; because it cannot be consistent with the *Justice*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* of God, to make any thing *necessary* to be believed or practised, which he has not *clearly* and *certainly* revealed to be his Will, and given all Men sufficient Abilities and Opportunities of knowing it to be so ; and therefore it follows, that whatever is not *clearly* and *certainly* revealed, can be no Law of Christianity, or ever be justly imposed as such, upon the *Consciences* of Men. This is evident, because every Law to which Obedience is due, must in *clear* and *express* Terms declare the Will of the Legislator ; and if in any Points it is *obscure*, he must either *himself*, or by others *commissioned* and *enabled* by him, explain his own Meaning, before Obedience can be justly required

quir'd in those Points: Therefore all the Laws of Christ's Kingdom must be deliver'd in *clear* and *express* Terms in the *Gospel*, or else be fully and distinctly explain'd by the Apostles, the *only* Persons he ever *Commission'd* or *enabled* to declare His Will with an *infallible* Authority. So that whatever Doctrine is not *clearly* and *expressly* deliver'd, either in the *Gospel* itself, or in the Writings of the *Apostles*, as a *Part* of Christ's Religion; can be no Law of the Christian Religion. Because the *undoubted* Truth and Necessity of such Doctrine, which entirely depends upon *Revelation*, and yet is not *clearly* reveal'd, can never by any *Humane* Learning or Interpretation be *certainly* known. And therefore tho' it may be worth the Labours of *Learned* Men to inquire into and endeavour to know and understand it, yet it can never be a *necessary* Part of Christianity, or a *Rule* of Christian Faith and Practice. So that the *true* and *undoubted* Authority of Church-Governours in Matters of *pure Religion* and *Conscience*, is to take Care that the Church of Christ be govern'd by the *express* Laws of Christ, and *no other*; and that the *Faith* and *Worship* of the Body of Christian People, under the Guidance of Their *External* and *Visible* Administration, be directed and regulated by the *express* Rule of Scripture *only*; and that no Terms of Communion be *ever* requir'd, that may exclude sincere Christians, or such as are desirous to adhere to their Baptismal Covenant, from joyning with them in public Worship and in the public Profession of Religion: That the *Scriptures* be carefully read, and the whole Flock committed to their Care be duly and fully instructed out of them in every Point of Christian Faith and Practice: That the *Sacraments* be Administer'd to such Persons and in such manner, as is appointed by Christ himself; And that all *open* and *evident* Breaches of Christ's *plain* and *undisputed* Laws, be punish'd with such *Censures*, as shall most tend to the *Edification* of the

Church, and the Salvation of Men's Souls. In such a Blessed State as this, where the Gospel is the *only* Rule of *Faith* and *Worship*, mutual Love and Charity must abound: And altho, through the Difference of Men's Learning and Tempers, and the Obscurity and Ambiguity of many Parts of Scripture, Differences of Opinion and Controversies must arise; yet these, joined with the Spirit of Meekness, can never harm *Religion*, but are Means of Discovering many *Christian Truths*, which without them would never be clearly brought to Light. And these Enquiries after and zealous Contentions for the *Truth*, are very acceptable to God, when pursued with *Impartiality* and *Sincerity* of Mind, and *Christian Charity and Forbearance*: And 'tis only thro' the Want of these, and indulging *Prejudice* and *Passion*, and the lust of Power and Dominion, that Disputes can disturb or weaken the *True Peace* and Interest of the Church. And therefore since a fervent Zeal even for *Truth*, is apt to carry Men out of Temper, and make them [thro' a secret Pride and Selfishness of Spirit] desire and endeavour to impose their Opinion upon one another, from whence Feuds and Animosities arise, which often end in Wrath and Hatred; Governours have Authority in all *Controversies of Faith*, to oblige all Parties to keep strictly to the *Rule of Scripture*, and not to endeavour to *obtrude* upon the Faith of weak and ignorant Christians, the uncertain Deductions of their own Reason for the express Doctrines of Christ; and above all, to exhort and command them to exercise to each other *mutual Forbearance, and Charity*.

From these Considerations of the Authority of the Scriptures and of the Church thus stated, the Following Propositions are strictly deducible. *1st*, That no *Interpretations* or *Decisions* of the Sense of Scripture in any Points of Doctrine by *fallible* Men, how *Learned* and how *Pious* soever, can ever have, or justly claim such *absolute* and *indisputable* Authority,



rity, as to become *Articles of the Christian Faith*, or *Terms of the Christian Salvation*; and therefore can never justly be *impos'd*, or *submitted to* as *Terms of Communion*, but with such *Latitude of Meaning*, as being always intended to be understood in that Sense of the Words only, wherein they are or may be most agreeable to the *express Rule of Scripture*, which is always the *Test and Standard of their Truth or Falshood*, and by which they may and must at all Times be tried and examin'd, due Deference and Regard being had to the *Learning, Judgment and Skill* of such Eminent Men, or Bodies of Men, as have afforded us their Assistance towards discovering the true Sense of any particular Doctrines of Scripture. And whoever *assents* to any *humane Doctrines*, or *Interpretations* of Scripture, in any other Sense than as they appear *plainly agreeable to*, and contained in the Scriptures themselves; doth so far make the *Doctrines and Commandments of Men*, and not the *Word of God, his Rule of Faith*, and sets up *humane Authority* against that of *Christ and his Apostles*. Therefore the Determinations of the *Church*, or *Ecclesiastical Governours of any Age*, or of *many Ages*, since the *Apostle's Time*, being equally *fallible* in all Points of Doctrine, can never *absolutely* be depended upon, or *impos'd*, or *receiv'd*, as *certain and unquestionable Truths*; but must give Place, whenever it appears that they interfere with, or contradict any *one plain and express Text of Scripture*, or *one demonstrative Reason*. And the true Christian Moderation of the *Church of England* is herein to be admir'd, which solemnly declares that no Doctrine is to be receiv'd, or enjoyn'd, but which can be prov'd, or so far as it can be prov'd, or in the Sense wherein it can be prov'd, to be *contain'd in Scripture*: Therefore,

2dly, All the *Authority any humane Ecclesiastical Power* can have in Matters of *reveal'd Truth*, is, faithfully to propose out of the Scriptures, what the

Word of God hath expressly taught; and to try and judge the Doctrines of all others, over whom they are appointed, by the *express* Declarations and Definitions of *Scripture* only. For to suppose that the *infallible Word of God* does not *clearly and expressly* contain all Doctrines *necessary* to procure *Salvation*, and to confute all Errors or *Heresies* that are *opposite* to such Doctrines, and *destructive* to Mens Salvation; (and no other are *necessary* to be determin'd;) is not only denying the Word of God to be the *Rule* of Christianity, but also impeaching the *Wisdom* of God, whose Holy Spirit could not express his own Meaning, in Things which he Hath made *necessary* to all, so *fully and clearly*, as *Man's* Wisdom and *fallible* Judgment pretends to do. So that the *Power of judging* in Matters of Religion invested in all Ecclesiastical Governours, as the *wise and faithful Guardians, Protectors, and Overseers* of the Christian Faith and Doctrines, being confin'd within the *Rule* or written *Law* of the Gospel; they can have no Right *judicially* to determine the Truth or Falshood of any Doctrines, but by *That express Rule only*. And when any *Learned and Pious* Christian shall appeal to the *Scriptures themselves*, (upon the Right which every Christian hath to read and understand them by his *own* Judgment and Reason, without which they are No Rule to Him) for the Truth of any Doctrine; in such Case, to try and Judge the Doctrine by the Determinations of any *Church*, that is, by any *fallible Interpretations* of Scripture, and not by Scripture *it self*, is directly to make *humane* Judgment of *equal* Authority with the *Law of Christ*; nay to make it a Rule of Conscience and Religion, *instead of the Law of Christ*: Which is the very *Essence* of *Popery* and *Antichristianity*. And to *censure* or *punish* any Person, for professing what he sincerely believes to be the Truth of Christ, and to be founded on the plain Sense and Reason of Scripture, merely because it may seem to interfere with some Doctrines

Doctrines which thro' *humane* Infirmity and Mistake may have been receiv'd, and thro' Error impos'd, as having been judg'd to be *contain'd* in Scripture, when they really are not, nor can be prov'd from it; is to assume a Power over the *Hearts* and *Consciences* of Men; and to condemn those whom Christ will certainly reward; and to determine those Things, which no one can do but he who is *infallible*; and to fix certain *Interpretations* of Scripture, as *unalterable* Rules to the Understandings of others: Which is an Authority no *fallible* Men are fit for, or were ever entrusted with; and the assuming of which is directly to make *another* Rule of Faith, besides what Christ has left; and to found the Christian Church and Religion on *another Foundation*, distinct from that which stands upon the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. It is therefore an *indisputable* Part of *Christian Liberty*, that every one be allow'd to *search the Scriptures*, and to judge *freely* of the Sense of them, according to that *Latitude* wherein Christ hath left them, and *independently* of all *humane Interpretations* whatsoever. And in whatever Instances this Liberty is restrain'd, and the Sense of Scriptures *fix'd* by any *humane* Authority; so far the *Doctrines* of Men, and not the *Word* of God is the *Rule of Faith*; and so far *Christianity* instead of being *established*, is indeed *prohibited*.

3dly, For the Scriptures being prov'd to be the Rule of Christian Faith and Communion, it appears that all Breaches in *Church Communion*, founded on Points of Doctrine, are ever justly charg'd upon those who insist to *impose*, as Terms of Communion, any such Doctrines as are not *expressly* contain'd in *Scripture*; And the *Separation* in such Case, is not a Breach of *Peace* or *Unity* on their Side who seperate, but is *necessary* to maintain the *true Catholic Unity*, and *Christian Peace*, properly founded in Faith and sound Doctrine and unfeigned *Charity*. Which Thing justifies our Separation from

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the Church of Rome, and proves Them to be Schismatics.

But 4thly, Where a Separation is made on Account of mere Ceremonies, which are clearly indifferent, and free from all Appearance and Suspicion of Superstition; there the Breach of Peace and Unity is on their Part who separate, and, being causeless, makes them Schismatical. For since Ceremonies are in the Nature of Things necessary to the Performance of all public Actions, and therefore of public Worship; and since the Scriptures have no where enjoy'd what Ceremonies shall only and always be us'd in Christian Communion, but have in Consequence plainly left the ordering of them to Humane Governours; and since it is the express Command of Scripture, as well as the Voice of Nature, that every Soul shall be Subject to the higher Powers, Rom. 13, 1, and obey those that have the Rule over them, Heb. 13, 17, in all Lawful Things; it necessarily follows, that such a Separation is, in those who separate, the Breach of a plain Duty; and nothing but a real, unpretended, and invincible Scruple of Conscience, and inward sincerity of Mind, can excuse them in the sight of God from the Sin of Schism. And such Persons should always remember, that the external Peace, and visible Unity of the Church, is superiour and preferable to every Thing, but plain and express Duty, or the avoiding of a sinful Action.

The Sum of the whole is. The Articles of Christian Faith, and Terms of Christian Communion, ought to be as Comprehensive as the Gospel; For why should we exclude those by any Humane Doctrines from the visible Communion and Fellowship of Christ's Servants upon Earth, whom Christ hath receiv'd into invisible Communion and Fellowship with himself and his Saints in Heaven? And it is the Glory of the true Protestant Church of England, that it makes the Scriptures the only Rule of Faith, and expressly declares that no Doctrine is to be believ'd as necessary to Salvation,

variation, but what is contain'd in them; and if not necessary to Salvation, why should it be thought necessary to Christian Communion, whose End is to procure Salvation to all who partake of it? It is the imposing of Things unnecessary, and Contracting the Terms of Christian Communion, and so narrowing the straight Way to Heaven, that hath laid the Foundation of almost all the Schisms in the Christian Church, and almost banish'd all Christian Charity out of the World. Nor is there any possible Way of healing the Wounds of Christ's Mystical Body, and restoring Peace and Unity to his Church; but by all Parties agreeing to take indeed the Scriptures for the only Rule of all reveal'd Truth, and to require no more of each other, either to be believ'd as necessary to Salvation, or to be impos'd as Terms of Communion, but what is clearly and indisputably declar'd in Scripture to be a Part of Christ's Religion; and to make up what cannot be accomplish'd in this manner, by mutual Forbearance and Charity.

To make a short Application of the whole.

We of this Nation are eminently bless'd with a most faithful Guardian of our Laws; One who knows the just Extent of Regal Power, and never made use of it but for the Good of his People. To our Great and Good King GEORGE most truly belongs that Character, which the Religious Emperor Marcus Antoninus delighted in, to be † φιλόθεωτος, a Friend to all Mankind. His Royal Virtues have not only secur'd the Liberties, and advanc'd the Credit and Glory of this Nation, but have extended their pow-

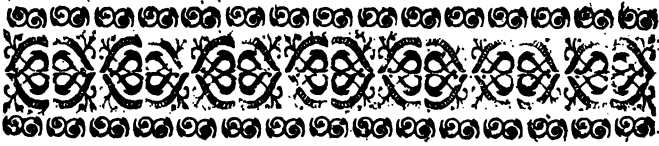
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† Πόλις ἢ πατρίς ὡς μὲν Ἀντωνίνω μοι ἡ πόλις, ὡς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ, ὁ κόσμος: As I am Antoninus, Rome is my City and Country; but as I am a Man, the whole World. Antonin. de stipho. ; Aibensgoas calls this Emperor φιλοθεωτότατος, in Legat. p. 11. And again, φιλόθεωτος p. 138. And Themistius in his Oration to Valens, says, that Good Kings are ἢ μόνον φιλομακρόδους, ἢ φιλορωμάνες, ἀλλὰ φιλοθεώπους

erful Influence over all *Europe* ; so that the whole *Protestant* Interest and Liberties depend upon him, and are supported by his *Power* and *Wisdom*. Nor hath God dispens'd less gracious Blessings to the *Church* by His Royal Hands ; making Him the *glorious* and *happy* Instrument of putting an End to all *our Fears* and all the *Hopes* of *Popery* ; and directing Him to incourage Principles *truly Protestant* in All whom He employs. By whose *Care*, *Integrity*, and *Christian Courage* and *Resolution*, we may justly hope in time to see all *unreasonable* and *superstitious* Prejudices defeated, and the *true Protestant Church* of *England* flourish gloriously :

Now to the *One God and Father of All*, through his *Son Jesus Christ*, by the *Guidance* and *Assistance* of the *Holy Ghost*, be ascrib'd all *Honour* and *Glory*, now and for Ever. Amen.





A N  
**A N S W E R**

T O

Mr. *Law's* Letter

T O T H E

Bishop of *B A N G O R*,

Concerning his late *S E R M O N*, and  
*P R E S E R V A T I V E*.

**I**T is an usual Way with some Writers, to introduce what they have to offer against the Opinions or Doctrines of others, by some foul Insinuations or Reflections in general, upon the evil Tendency and Design of the Author they are opposing. This they know is apt to raise the Indignation of the *vulgar, injudicious, and prejudic'd* Part of Mankind, whom only they can hope to please; and makes the Way easy, for *Harangues* and *Gavils* to pass for *Reason* and *Argument*. This Method Mr. *Law* amongst others hath taken; and begins his Address to the Bishop, by telling him, *Page 2d,*  
 H that

that there is not a *Libertine* or *loose Thinker* in England; but he imagines you intend to dissolve the Church as a Society: And presently after; An *Adversary* does not need any *Malice* to make him believe you no Friend to the Constitution of the Church as a regular Society. How Mr. Law came to such a thorough Acquaintance with the *Libertines* and *loose Thinkers*, as to know the Judgment of the whole *Seēt* of them concerning the Design of his *Lordship*, (who, I dare say, has no Dealings with them, and never had a Thought to do any thing that might give them the least Advantage over Religion,) I need not enquire. But to the *invidious Suggestion* I answer; that the Church, as a Society founded on the *Laws* of Jesus Christ, can only be supported by being governed by those *Laws*: So that 'tis very strange that the *Bishop*, by contending all thro' his *Sermon*, that Jesus Christ is the *King* and alone *Legislator* of his Church: and that the *express Kule* of his Gospel is the *Law* by which Christians are to be governed; and that no *Human Doctrines*, or *fallible Interpretations* of this *Law*, are to be imposed upon the *Faith* of Christians, or can have *Authority* over the *Consciences* of Men; and that all *Penalties* made use of by *Human Power* to enforce such an usurped Dominion over the *Faith* and *Consciences* of Men in Affairs of Religion and Salvation, is a taking of *Christ's Kingdom* out of his Hands, and placing it in their own, and ruling in his Stead: 'Tis very strange, I say, that the insisting on these Things, on the Truth of which depends the very *Essence* of the *Christian Religion*, and which are the *fundamental Terms* on which a *Christian Society* can be established, and without the maintaining of which no Church or Society can be truly *Christian*; should be thought to dissolve the Church as a Society. That which dissolves the Church as a *Christian Society* and the *Kingdom of Christ*, is; when Men take upon them to act *Authoritatively* and *Tyrannically* in this *Kingdom*,



dom, *imposing their Sense and Interpretations* of Christ's Laws as a *Rule of Conscience*, and as necessary Terms of Christian *Communion and Salvation*; and pass *Judgment and Condemnation* on all, who will not or cannot submit to *their Doctrines*, as to the *certain Will and Meaning* of Christ; when they *contract* the Rule of *Faith*, and Terms of Christian *Communion*, by inserting into *Creeeds* and public Forms of *Worship*, their own *uncertain Explanations* of Christ's *Doctrines*, and bind them *equally* with his *Doctrines* upon the *Faith and Consciences* of Men. This indeed is making the *Church*, instead of a *regular religious Society*, over which *Christ only* rules by his *infallible Law*, to become a *mere Human Polity*; wherein the *Words of Men*, and not of *G O D*, are the *Rule of Faith and Worship*; and wherein the *Law of Christ* is circumscrib'd and confin'd by the narrow Limits of *Human Understanding*; and wherein the *Interest and Power*, the *Rewards and Punishments of Men* in *this World*, and not the *sincere Love of the Knowledge of G O D*, the *gracious Promises and dreadful Terrors of the Lord* in *another World*, are the *great Motives to, and Sanctions of the Profession of Religion*. As to the *outward Regimen of the Church*, or the appointing *decent Rites and Ceremonies* for the *Sake of Peace and Order*, in which properly *Human Authority* takes Place; the *Bishop meddles not at all* with that: So that the *Power of the Church* is *untouch'd* by him, so long as it keeps within its own proper Bounds.

Mr. *Law's first Attack* upon the *Bishop*, is from the *Words of his Preservative*, p. 98, which he thus cites, *viz.* "But when you are secure of your Integrity before God," [the *Bishop* adds, *of your sincere Disposition to search after his Will, and to receive the Truth in the Love of Truth, whensoever and from whomsoever it is offer'd,*] "this will lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the Terrors of Hell, or the vain Words of regular and uninter-

" rupted Successions; authoritative Benedictions;  
 " Excommunications; ——— Nullity or Validity of  
 " God's Ordinances to the People, upon Account  
 " of Niceties and Trifles, or any other the like  
 " Dreams;" [the Bishop adds, to illustrate his  
 Meaning; of those who have separated themselves,  
 or of those who follow them in those Doctrines; or in-  
 deed any thing but what He (N. B.) who is your Lord  
 and Master and Judge, hath himself declared that your  
 Salvation shall depend upon] Mr. Law's Observation  
 is, p 3. Thus much must be implied here: be not afraid  
 of the Terrors of Men, who would persuade you of the  
 Danger of being in this or that Communion, and fright  
 you into particular Ways of worshipping God; who would  
 make you believe such Sacraments, and such Clergy are  
 necessary to recommend you to his Favour. This is one  
 Instance of Mr. Law's Sincerity; who does not un-  
 derstand the true Nature of it, as I shall shew pre-  
 sently at large The Bishop adviseth Christians not  
 to be afraid of the Terrors with which the Nonjurors  
 endeavour to frighten them, on Pretence of all  
 God's Ordinances being void for want of such an  
 uninterrupted Succession of Ministers from the Apo-  
 stles, as those Men make necessary for the Validity  
 of them to the People. The Bishop might well  
 say, that such a Succession [which the Gospel is  
 so far from making necessary, that it never men-  
 tions it at all, and which neither the Apostles nor  
 Primitive Christians ever said was necessary, and  
 which can never be proved that there is in any  
 Church in the World such an uninterrupted Suc-  
 cession,] was not necessary to the Validity of God's  
 Ordinances, or to recommend Christians to God's  
 Favour: But does it follow, that the Bishop said or  
 meant, that the Sacraments appointed expressly by  
 Christ himself were not necessary to entitle Chri-  
 stians to the Favour of God, because he thinks the  
 Validity of them does not depend on their being ad-  
 ministered thro the Hands of such a Succession of Mi-  
 nisters

nisters as the *Nonjurors* contend for? And that the People being *sincere* in using such Means as God had given them the Knowledge of, and Opportunities of using, after their *honest* Search to know his Will, and Desire to receive his Truth; need not doubt but that God's Ordinances were *effectually* administered to them, to the Purposes of God's Favour and *Christian* Salvation, tho' it should happen that their *Clergy* were not derived by (what is impossible any where to be proved) an *uninterrupted* Succession from the Apostles? Which truly is in it self a *mere Nicety* or *Speculation*, (having no Foundation in Scripture) and such an one as is perplexed with a Thousand Accidents which might defeat and break it. And surely *They* do but ill Service to the *Church of England*; and but *ill* deserve its Thanks, who build the *Validity* of its Sacraments, and its Title to the *covenanted* Mercies of God, on such a Foundation, as 'tis *more than probable* the Storms and Tempests of Satan and of this World, the *Faiousness* and *Wickedness* of Men have long ago *overthrown*; or so quite defaced, that if it does *yet* any where stand, 'tis impossible to make it with *any Certainty* appear. What Doubts and Scruples, what Fears and Anxieties of Conscience, lest the great Mercies and Blessings of the Gospel be out of all Possibility of our Attainment; must this Doctrine, if it was true, be attended with? So that it was very needful for the Bishop, in order to comfort and strengthen the Minds of honest and sincere Christians against such Snares and Terrors of Conscience, as these Doctrines were apt to bring along with them; to declare openly the *Truth* and *Simplicity* of the Gospel, and to shew them thence what *God* and *Christ* have required at their Hands in order to their Favour and Acceptance. Therefore

His Lordship says, *Preserv.* p. 90, 91, " Every  
 " one may find it in his own Conduct to be true,  
 " that his Title to God's Favour cannot depend  
 " upon

" upon his actual being, or continuing in any particular Method ; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience. — The Favour of God follows Sincerity considered as such, and consequently equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity". These Assertions of the Bishop are directed against the Unreasonableness and Uncharitableness of the *Nonjurors* and *Papists*, who deny any *covenanted* Mercy, or Favour of God thro' Christ, to those who are not of *their Communion* ; and make it *essential* to *Christian Salvation*, to be and *con-sinne* in *their* Method of Church Communion and Worship. The Bishop argues on the contrary, that God hath not made any particular *Method*, or *external* Form of Communion, or of Church Government, absolutely *necessary* to entitle Christians to his Favour ; but that Christians under *different* Forms of Communion and Government, if they are *sincere*, *viz.* in their Profession of Religion according to the best Light they have, and use the best Means they can get of having the Ordinances of Christ *rightly and duly administered* unto them, and are withal *charitable* towards those who may differ from them in these Things ; that such a *sincere* Profession of Christianity, under the *external* Method or Circumstances which *Providence* hath placed Men in, is *alone* sufficient to ascertain to them the Favour of God ; and that, according to the *Degree* of their *Sincerity*, they shall partake of his promised Favour ; and need not be anxious about their being excluded from it, (when they are conscious to themselves of professing Christianity in *Truth*, and *Sincerity*, and *Charity*,) for want of any particular *external* Form or Method of Communion, which it may be *Conscience* or the Necessity of their Circumstances debars them of, or will not allow them to admit. The Bishop's Words and whole Reasoning on this Point, plainly and clearly carry such a Meaning as this ; and yet Mr. *LAW* draws from them this *monstrous* and most

*uncharitable Conclusion, p. 4. that according to the Bishop's Notions, if a Man be not an Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only sincere Quakers, Ranters; Muggletonians, and Fifth Monarchy Men, are as much in the Favour of God as any of the Apostles; but likewise sincere Jews, Turks, and Deists, are upon as good a Bottom, and as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian.*

If such Interpretations of other Men's Words against all Appearance of Truth and Reason be admitted, then it is easy to make any Man an Enemy to Religion, even while he is endeavouring to support it by the best and clearest Arguments. It is not, says the Bishop, *this or that external Form of Worship, or Method of Church Government, on which the Christian's Title to the Favour of God depends; because God dispenseth his Favour, not according to the Degree of Zeal for particular external Means which he himself has not made necessary, but according to the Degree of inward Sincerity in serving and worshipping him (as he has expressly commanded) in Spirit and in Truth.* Then, says Mr. Law, *according to these Notions, if a Man be not an Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of; That is, a Christian may as well be without his Religion, as without some particular external Means of it. A fair and logical Conclusion indeed: As if Religion, and the external Means of Religion, were the same thing; and a Man could not be a Christian, and entitled to Christian Blessings, unless he had the Fortune to live under the Guidance and Administration of Bishops derived by uninterrupted Succession from the Apostles: Which the Scriptures have nowhere made necessary to a Man's being a Christian, or having a Title to Christian Blessings. Or as if, because God hath not made any particular external Form of Communion or Government necessary to his Favour and Acceptance, therefore all Religions were alike to him, and gave a like Title to his Blessing.*

Blessing. The Christian's Salvation, says the Bishop, depends not upon *external Modes*, but upon the *internal and sincere Profession of Christianity*: Therefore, says Mr. Law, *Religions are all alike to a Man that is not an Hypocrite*. Is not this extreme clear and strong Reasoning? To argue that the Christian Religion depends upon *particular external Modes and Forms*, is as absurd as it would be to argue, that all Government depends upon one particular Constitution. But, with Mr. Law's Leave, there is Difference between an *Hypocrite*, and one whose Religion is not *sincerely* founded. An *Hypocrite* in Religion, is one who professeth contrary to his *Conscience*, and so is of *no Religion at all*: But a Person may really believe the Religion he professeth, to be *true*, and so be no *Hypocrite*; and yet thro' *voluntary Ignorance*, and Neglect of using Means which were in his Power, may have settled his *religious Sentiments* on a very *false and insincere Foundation*. So that if it was a *Consequence* (as it is none) that if a Man is *sincere*, it matters not what Religion he is of, [for to me it is a very great Matter that I am a *Christian* rather than an *Infidel*;) yet it would not follow by any Rule of Logick, that if a Man was not an *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of: He may still be answerable for his *Insincerity*, in not making use of the best Means in his Power to come to the Knowledge of the *true Religion*. 2dly, God's Favour (says the Bishop) equally follows every equal Degree of *Sincerity*; Therefore (says Mr. Law) a *sincere Quaker*, &c. is as much in the Favour of God, as any of the *Apostles*; That is, one who professeth the most *absurd Tenets* in Religion under the Means of knowing better, may be as *sincere* in such Profession, as the most holy and inspir'd *Apostle*. The *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Muggletonians*, and *Fifth Monarchy Men*, are much obliged to Mr. Law, for his Opinion of their having *Sincerity* in an equal Degree with the *Apostles*. For he must suppose that Men of their Prin-

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ciples may have that *disinterested* Zeal, and *sincere* Love for the Truth of Christ, and hearty Desire to approve themselves to God thro' Him only, which shall carry them, like the *Apostles*, to the very *Height* and utmost *Perfection* of *Christian* Practice; before he can suppose them to have *equal Sincerity*; and consequently *equal Title* to the *Favour of God* with the *Apostles*. And he that can suppose all this, may, I think, by just Inference, suppose *Quakers*, *Ranters*, &c. to be as much in the *Favour of God*, as any of the *Apostles*. Otherwise, Mr. Law must own, that he hath abus'd the Bishop in the Consequence which he has drawn from his Words. But, I believe, the Bishop never thought, that *unreasonable Enthusiasts* can have as much *Christian Sincerity* in their Profession of Religion, as an *Apostle*. And consequently, tho' some of them may possibly have so much, as may entitle them to some Portion of God's Favour and Mercy, yet not to an *equal Degree* with an *Apostle*, whose *Sincerity* was unquestionably the best grounded and most *Substantial* of any other. What follows, is still worse: Likewise (says Mr. Law) *sincere Jews, Turks, and Deists, are as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian*. I do not indeed think that the Bishop (had he been speaking of any such Thing,) would have peremptorily excluded (as some do) a *sincere Jew, Turk, or Deist*, from all Hopes of God's Favour: But I am well perswaded that he would never assert, even admitting the *Sincerity* of a *Turk, Jew, or Deist*, was as *real and true* as that of the *sincerest Christian*, that he was therefore equally *SECURE* of the Favour of God, as the *Sincerest Christian*. Tho' *Sincerity* cannot but in all Men be acceptable to God, who *tries the Heart*; yet it is not, in *Any, meritorious* of God's Favour. And therefore since, notwithstanding Men's greatest *Sincerity*, there is upon Account of Transgressions, Room for *Grace and Favour*, which he hath promis'd only to the *sincere*



*sincere* Christian. No Man, tho' *equally sincere*, can be *so secure* of God's Grace and Favour, as a *sincere* Christian. And this is a great *Privilege* of the *Christian Religion*, which I am perswaded the Bishop never meant to disown. He proceeds in the same absurd Manner to argue, that, upon the Bishop's Notion of *Sincerity*, a *Persecutor* hath *equal Title to the Favour of God with a Martyr*; and he that burns the *Christian*, if he be but in Earnest, has the same Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in *Christ*: Neither minding, that the Bishop all along speaks of *Sincerity* amongst *Christians*; nor considering otherwise, that 'tis impossible a *Persecutor*, any more than a *Murderer*, should have *equal Sincerity* with a *Christian Martyr*; or, if he could have *equal Sincerity*, that yet he who *denies Christ*, should have any Title to the Reward of a *Christian*, which is wholly owing to a *Christian Faith* and *Actions founded upon it*.

But what an absurd Notion of *Sincerity* has Mr. Law; as if to be *in Earnest*, was the same with being *really Sincere*? and that *Sincerity* was nothing but a *blind* and ungovernable *Zeal* hurrying a Man into Action, without Regard had to the *Sincerity* of the *Principles* on which it is founded. Such *Sincerity*, is like that of a *Builder*, who carries on his Building, upon the Foundation he hath laid, with *Diligence* and *Exactness*, but never considers or regards [tho' he knows it was his chief Business to mind it,] that the *Foundation it self* is *false* and *rotten*. The Truth is; 'tis possible indeed, that thro' *gross* and *wilful Ignorance*, *Superstition*, *Uncharitableness* of Mind, *implicitly* adhering to the *Doctrines* of others without Examination, or indulging a *Passionateness* of Temper, and the like, a Man may become perswaded that 'tis his Duty, and for the Glory of God, to *persecute* others; And *this may be the Case* either of a *Heathen* or *Christian*; but then it is to be consider'd, that *Persecu-*

tion being a plain Violation of the Law of *Nature*, by which Law every Man has a Right to worship God in that Way which he thinks most acceptable to him; and also of the *Gospel*, wherein our *Saviour* expressly tells Christians, that *He came not to destroy Men's Lives but to save them*; those *Principles*, on which are built *Practices* so plainly contrary both to *natural* and *reveal'd* Religion, cannot have a *sincere* Foundation. Men must have been wanting to themselves and their own Reason, and to the Use of those Means that God has provided for the Conduct of all Men's Consciences, before they can persuade themselves, that it can ever be their *Duty*, or *lawful*, to *persecute*, *hurt*, or put others to *Death*, *merely* for worshipping God in a different manner from themselves. So that they must be guilty, and accountable to God, for doing so great an *Injury* to others; when it was in their Power, had they but duly us'd the Means which God and *Nature* had provided them with, to know better. The *Act* may possibly be *sincerely* founded upon, or follow from, the *Principles* they have admitted; but they cannot [whenever they examine the Conduct of their Consciences] but *condemn* themselves for being seduc'd and led away by such *unreasonable* and *inhumane* *Principles*, as prompted them to invade the *Property* or *Lives* of Men, upon Account of the *mere* Profession of Religion; which can never possibly interfere with the Rights of others, whether *Religious* or *Civil*, or disturb the *Peace*, or hurt the *public Good* of any Society. So that a *real Sincerity*, and such as the Bishop asserts to render Men acceptable to God, and to be the *Life* and *Soul* of *true* Religion; is a *Sincerity* of *Principles* and *Practices*, founded upon a *Moral* or *Christian* Probity of Mind; and in the due Use of all such Means, as God hath any Way afforded them to know his Will; with a *sincere* *Disposition*, as the Bishop expresseth, *Preserv. P. 98th*, (cited by Mr. *Law* himself, tho' he was pleas'd to

overlook the Words,) *to search after and to receive the Truth, in the Love of Truth, whensoever and from whomsoever it is offer'd*, in order to do their Duty either towards God or Man. Such a *Sincerity* as this, will always be acceptable to God, who desires *not to reap where he hath not sown*, and requires no more of Men than he hath given them Abilities and Opportunities of knowing. And tho' it may be found in Men professing a *false Religion*, or entertaining some *absurd and unreasonable Tenets* under the Profession of the *true*; tho' it may be found in a *Jew, Turk, or Heathen*, and not be altogether wanting in an *Enthusiast*; yet 'tis impossible that it should ever dwell with a *Persecutor*, or with one who hath no *Charity or Good Will* for those who differ from him in Matters of Religion. It is as easie to suppose a *Murderer, an Adulterer, or a Thief*, to be *really sincere*, as a *Persecutor or Hater* of his Brother. And no Doubt, the Reason why *St. Paul* condemn'd himself for having *persecuted the Church of Christ*, *I Cor. 15. 9. I Tim. 1. 13.* tho' he did it *ignorantly*; was because he had neglected to make use of those Means, which he had in his Power, of knowing better; For it is absurd for any Man to *condemn* himself for having done that, which, after having us'd the best Means he had in his Power of knowing his Duty, he *sincerely* believ'd to be his Duty to do. In many Cases, a Man when he comes to know better, may be sorry for what he has done; but cannot condemn himself as a *Sinner*.

But then *Secondly*: As *Probity* of Mind, and the due Use of all Means which God hath given to Men of knowing his Will and worshipping him, are *necessary* to found a *real and through Sincerity of Principles* upon; we cannot suppose that those whose *Principles* are evidently *absurd and unreasonable*, or contrary to the Word of God *clearly* reveal'd to them, can either have That *Probity* of Mind, or *have made that due Use of Means* of knowing bet-

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ter, which they might, and ought to have done. And so [tho' they may have some Degrees of *Sincerity*,] yet they cannot be suppos'd to have that *thorough* and *Substantial Sincerity*, with which the *Apostles* profess'd Religion, who left no Means *unus'd*, no Duty *undone*; nay, nor a Sincerity *equal* to theirs, whose *Principles* have nothing in them absurd or *unreasonable*, or contrary to the *express* Word of God. And tho' there are *Degrees of Sincerity of Principles*, yet very little can possibly stand with Theirs who *hate, persecute* and *destroy* their Brethren.

Hence it appears that *true Christian Sincerity* in the Profession of Religion, is not to be *zealously* affected with, and tenacious of the Doctrines of any particular Church or Party of Religion, making it a *Glory* and *Merit* to adhere inviolably and without Examination (upon meer humane Authority) to whatever Opinions happen to be receiv'd and *impos'd* at the *Time* and *Place* where Men live; and violently opposing, anathematizing, and persecuting all who differ from them; neither using themselves, nor allowing others to use the *Christian Liberty of searching the Scriptures*, to know whether the Doctrines taught by any *Church* or Number of *fallible* Men whatsoever *be so or no*. In this Sense of *Sincerity*, (which is nothing but unreasonable Prejudice) a Man may be the most *sincere Papist*, or *sincere Protestant*, and yet be far from being a *sincere Christian*, or having any Religion at all, properly speaking. But it is to examine diligently and impartially [according to the Measure of Time and Abilities and Helps God has afforded us] the Scriptures themselves, which are the only Rule of all *reveal'd Truth*, with an upright and honest Mind, throughly disposed and heartily desirous to know the Will of God therein contain'd, and resolv'd to be contented with, and to require no more of others than that Measure of Faith which the Spirit of God hath thought fit to reveal; and therefore to suspend all

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*Assent* to all Doctrines taught or receiv'd by Men, till it appears by comparing them with the Rule of Scripture, that they are not the *Doctrines* or *Commandments of Men* but the *Word of God*. The Consequence of this Method of conducting our Consciences in Affairs of Religion, would certainly be, that all Christians thus *sincerely* affected, would immediately agree, in receiving all Doctrines *necessary* to be believ'd, as being clearly and expressly deliver'd in the Word of God, and in not *imposing* upon one another any Doctrine not thus found to be *necessary*; the doing of which would presently discard out of all Communion and Societies of Christians, all Doctrines upon what Pretence soever introduc'd into them, which appear not to have any Foundation in Scripture or Christianity, and are only supported by Custom, or it may be by *Interest*, *Fashion*, or *Ambition*; and so happily put an End to the vain Pretences of humane Power in Matters of Religion, which hath brought so much Confusion into the Christian *Faith* and *Worship*, and so much contract'd Christian *Unity* and *Charity*, and laid the Foundation of everlasting *Contentions*, *Animosities*, and *Schisms*. Christ would then be the only King and Ruler of his Church, and his righteous and infallible Laws the only Rule of *Faith* and *Worship*; No Offences or Scruples of Conscience would be pretended on one Hand, or thro' worldly Interest and Love of Power caus'd on the other Hand; mutual *Love*, true *Peace*, and unfeign'd *Charity* would abound, and Christian Fellowship and Communion would be as comprehensive as the Gospel the great Rule and Support of it.

This is the true Notion of a *real Sincerity*. A *Sincerity of mere Acts*, founded upon *ill Principles*, which it was our *Fault* to admit, is not a *true Sincerity*; nor is it the Bishop's Notion of a *real Sincerity*, as Mr. Law pretends *pag. 9th*. A *Real Sincerity*, which is acceptable to God, is a *Sincerity of Principles*, form'd with a *sincere Disposition to search after*

*after the Will of God, and to receive his Truth in the Love of Truth, whensoever and by whomsoever it is offer'd.* These are the Bishop's Words in that very Passage which Mr. Law cited, but overlook'd the Words. And is this a *Sincerity contracted by ill Habits and Guilty Behaviour?* such a *Sincerity*, for which God may send Men a strong Delusion that they should believe a Lye? Mr. Law may plead for such a *Sincerity*; as he really does, when he supposes a Quaker, nay a Persecutor, may be as sincere as an Apostle and Martyr: But he must not put it upon the Bishop, who hath, as I have prov'd, another and better Notion of *Sincerity*; such an one as exposes the *Weakness and Unreasonableness* of all Mr. Law's Reasonings on this Head; and which, had he consider'd, would have sav'd him several Pages. However, he thinks that he may conclude from the Bishop's Notion of *Sincerity*, that he is not in the Interest of the Church of England, but as much in the Interest of Quakers, Muggletonians, &c. as in *hera*. That is; because the Bishop in stating and explaining the true Nature of Christianity in general, does not confine it to the *Communion of the Church of England*, but allows that others may be sincere Christians, and have a Title to Christian Salvation; therefore he is not in the Interest of the Church of England. Can Mr. Law Think, that true Christian *Sincerity* will ever prompt Men to believe that it is needless to seek for Peace and Unity of Communion, because sincere Professors in different Communions may be saved? Certainly it will rather make them, as the Bishop observes, *Preservat. P. 97th, conscientiously solicitous about it, and resolved to prefer nothing before it, except Purity and Conscience.* And I cannot but think, that if all Parties (as Christian *Sincerity* obligeth them) would heartily and conscientiously seek for Peace and Unity; and cease, out of *Pride, Selfishness, and Love of Power*, or whatever other Vice or *Inordinate Passion* it is that possesseth them, to im-  
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pose upon, *curse* and *damn* each other; and resolve to have no other Terms of *Communion* and *Worship* than the *express* Doctrines and Forms of Scripture, to which All *sincere* Christians have a Right, and would be satisfied with; there would then be no such Breaches of *Communion*; there would be an End of all Pretences of *uninterrupted* Succession, and *Nullity* of Christian Ordinances for Want of it: All *true* Christians would hold *Communion* with one another, tho' under different Forms and Methods of Government; and it would plainly appear, who were *Christ's* and who were *not his*, by an entire Submission to his Will, and Resignation of themselves to be governed by *his Laws only*. I cannot dismiss this Point, without observing what a *poor Quibble* Mr. Law offers to his Lordship, P. 71b. *Our Saviour declar'd, that those who believ'd, should be saved; but those who believed not, should be damned: Will your Lordship say, that all Unbelievers were insincere? or that tho' they were damned, they were yet in the same Favour of God, as those who were saved?* His Lordship will certainly say, that all those *Unbelievers*, whom our Lord pronounc'd to be damn'd, were *insincere*; and yet it will not follow that all *Unbelievers* are *insincere*; or tho' *sincere*, yet in the *same Favour* of God as *sincere Christians*.

His Lordship argu'd, that Christ had not made his *covenanted Salvation* to depend on an *uninterrupted* Succession of Ministers, as the *Nonjurors* pretend; or given to them any Authority to *absolve* or *condemn* Sinners by their *Sentence*; So that Christians needed not to be concern'd at their *vain Words* of *regular and uninterrupted Succession*, and the like, as if their *Salvation* depended upon it; when Christ their *Lord*, and *Master*, and *Judge*, had not declar'd it to be any Term of their Acceptance with Him. This Doctrine of the *Validity* of all God's Ordinances depending upon the *Authority* of an *unbroken Succession of Clergy* from the Apostles, unsupported by  
 Scripture,



*Scripture*, contrary to *Reason* and *Experience*, and of such *fatal Consequence* to Religion; the Bishop exposes, under the Notion of *Trifles*, *Niceties*, and *Dreams*; (and herein he spares them, for) he might very justly have call'd it the *Vanity*, *Presumption*, and even *Blasphemy* of those Men who have most *unreasonably separated themselves* from Us, and from the whole *Protestant Interest*. To This, Mr. *Law* replies, P. 9th, according to his usual Way of Reasoning, that *it is imply'd in those Words of the Bishop, that no Kind of Ordination or Mission of the Clergy, is of any Consequence or Moment to us*. This surely is a very *absurd Consequence*, drawn from a plain Truth. As if the *Mission* of the *Clergy*, or *public Ministers* of the Gospel, cou'd be of no *Use* or *Moment* to the Church, unless deriv'd (through the Church of Rome) by an *uninterrupted Succession* from the Apostles; and unless the *covenanted Mercies* of God depend upon such a *Succession*. This is exactly such an Argument as the following one. *Monarchy*, or *Civil Government*, can be of no *Use* or *Moment* to the *Christian State*, unless deriv'd by an *indefeasible Hereditary Line* from *Constantine the Great*, the first *Christian Emperor*; the Scripture saying just as much of the one as of the other. The *Consequence* and *Moment* of a *public Ministry*, does not depend on the *intermediate Hands* through which it is deriv'd. If indeed Mr. *Law* could have prov'd (which he does not pretend to do) that an *uninterrupted Succession* of *Clergy* was *expressly appointed* by Christ himself, or his Apostles; it would have follow'd that *no other Ministry* would be *regular*: But even yet it would not have followed, that the *covenanted Mercies* of God must *depend* upon such a *regular Succession*, or be *forfeited* for want of it: Especially when perhaps it is not possible to be had, nor can certainly be proved to be in *Any Communion*; or if it could be prov'd that it is, and *where* it is, yet cannot perhaps be procur'd without submitting to plainly *sinful Terms* of

Communion, or dissolving all *public Peace* of both Church and State. All these Things are to be consider'd and reply'd to, before Mr. *Law's* Consequence can have any Appearance of Truth or Reason in it. But it does *truly* follow from the Bishop's Words, that no *particular Kind* or Form of *Ordination* is *absolutely necessary* to procure Salvation to Christians; and surely no *Protestant* will presume to say that it is. But it does not at all follow, (as Mr. *Law* thinks,) either that a *Mission* not deriv'd by *uninterrupted Succession* from the Apostles, is of no *Consequence* or *Moment* to the Church; or that it is not *regular* and *Lawful*, when it is *necessary* to depart from such a *Succession* [which, supposing it to be any where found, was merely accidental, as all Successions in Civil Government are;] in order to preserve the *Christian Faith* and *Communion* of the Church free from *Antichristian* Corruptions and Impositions, (which was the Case of the Reformation, supposing the Succession to have remain'd unbroken till then:) Or lastly, admit it to follow that an *Ordination would not be Regular* (in Mr. *Law's* Sense) or deriv'd from those [by way of *uninterrupted Succession*] who had *Authority from Christ to ordain*; yet even still it will by no means be a Consequence (as he argues) *that therefore no particular Kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another*; any more than it follows, that because *Monarchical* Government need not be establish'd upon one *indefeasible Hereditary* Line, therefore No one particular kind of Government is *better* for any State than another.

As it may still be *better* to keep up the Government of a *Monarchy* in those Nations, who yet thro' the *Tyranny* and *Oppression* of some Rulers have been forc'd to lay any particular Family aside: So it may be *always* best for the *Church* to continue that *Kind* of Ministry which the Apostles Instituted, who knew best what Government tended most to *promote the real Interests* of Religion; tho' there may  
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perhaps be a *Necessity* of leaving the *Communion* of those who are deriv'd from them by *immediate* and *uninterrupted* Succession.

Mr. Law proceeds, P. 10th, to tell the Bishop, *that he not only gives up Episcopal Ordination by ridiculing a Succession, but likewise by the same Argument excludes any Ministers on Earth from having Christ's Authority.* And P. 11th; *that if there be no Succession of Ordainers from him (Christ,) every one is equally qualify'd to ordain.* But he goes on, *that no private Person is qualify'd to ordain, any more than to make a Lord Chancellor.* And P. 12th, *that no Man, or Number of Men can make a Priest, any more than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, and add a-new Settlement for the Conveyance of Spiritual Advantages.* To all this, I reply; *1st* his Lordship neither gives up *Episcopal Ordination*, nor *ridicules a Succession*; but only thinks it *ridiculous*, or worse, to make the *covenanted Mercies* of God, without Warrant from his Word, depend on an *uninterrupted Succession*. An *Episcopal Ordination*, may be without an *uninterrupted Succession*; and if the *Succession* were *uninterrupted*, yet the *Validity* of the Christian Ordinances does not at all depend upon it. I would fain know why, supposing (what is extremely probable) there be no where an *uninterrupted Succession* of Ministers from Christ and his Apostles, *all Ministers* must therefore be *excluded from having any Authority from Christ*. Where hath Christ in his Gospel delegated an *Ecclesiastical Authority* to Ministers derived by an *uninterrupted Succession* from his Apostles? The Scriptures are entirely silent in such *Speculations*; and no more appoint *one unalterable Form* of Government in the *Church*, than in the *State*. And it may as reasonably be argued from the Scriptures always enjoying *civil Obedience to Kings*, that there can no where be any other Lawful Form of *civil Government* than *Monarchy*; as from their requiring Submission to *Pastors*, which were then ap-

pointed by the Apostles in preaching the Doctrine of Christ, it can be inferred that there can be no lawful or *regular* Pastors who are not deriv'd by *un-interrupted* Succession from them. The Apostles, to whom was committed the Preaching of the Gospel, and the Planting of the Church, must needs appoint *some* Form of Government, but made no *particular* Kind absolutely *necessary*. And I desire to know, why they who have no *immediate* Commission by *un-interrupted* Succession from the Apostles, may not, if need be, for the good of the Church, appoint a *Ministry*; as well as they who were (or perhaps were not) deriv'd by Succession *immediately* from the Apostles, could invest one Part of the Clergy, *viz.* *Deacons*, with the Powers of *preaching* and *Baptizing*, which they were not invested with by the Apostles, nor for a long Time allow'd to exercise in the Church. If *Apostolic* Institutions are never in any Circumstances to be varied, I would never desire to put an harder Task upon Mr. *Law*, than to prove that there is *at this Day*, or hath been for *many Ages*, any *Apostolic* or *regularly* instituted Church in the Christian World. The Truth is; They always act in the *Name*, and by the *Authority* of *Christ*, who are appointed by the Church to be its *public Ministers*; just as they act in the *Name* and by the *Authority* of God, who are by the *State* entrusted with the *Civil* Administration. All Ecclesiastical Power was *originally* founded *with*, and stands *by the* Consent of the *Church*; and the *Church* hath always a *rightful* Power to change any particular Ministers, or any particular *Form* of Ecclesiastical Government, which they shall sincerely judge does prejudice the real Interest of *Christianity*, the *End* to which the other is appointed as a *Subordinate Means*. Therefore the *true* Difference betwixt the *Clergy* and *Laity* is, that the *one* hath (according to the Institution of *Christ*) a *public Commission* from the *Church* to *preach* the Gospel, and administer the Saeraments,

ments, and all other Ordinances of Religion in a Publick manner, which the *other* hath not.

Secondly, Mr. Law's Argument; *that if there be no Succession of Ordainers from Christ, every one is equally qualify'd to ordain; and that no Man or Number of Men can make a Priest;* is just as good, as *This* relating to civil Monarchical Government, *viz.* if the hereditary Line is interrupted, then every one is equally qualify'd to govern, and no Man or Number of Men can set up a King. As if in such Cases the Church and State, each in their proper way, have not Power from God and Christ, when it is necessary to their own Preservation, to appoint or ordain public Ministers and Magistrates, who shall administer to them the Ordinances of Religion, and govern the Civil State. A private Person cannot choose a Lord Chancellor, for this plain Reason, because it is an Office relating not to *private* but to *public* Rights, and so requires a *public* Consent: Neither can a *private* Person choose or ordain a Bishop or Minister of the Church, because his Office is of a *public* Nature, and relates to whole Societies of Christians. In all Cases where the Rights of *many* are concern'd, there must be the Consent of *many* either *express'd* or *tacitly imply'd*. Therefore when through *Necessity* any settled Order or any Form of Church-Government is varied, that Religion may be preserv'd *uncorrupt*, and free from *Tyrannical Impositions*, then every Christian Society hath an *undoubted* Right to appoint its own Ecclesiastical Ministers; and the Commission receiv'd from it, *authorizeth* them to act *in the Name of Christ*; and they have *His Authority*, who hath appointed that there should be *public* Ministers in his Church to Officiate in Matters of Religion, but hath no where appointed one particular *Succession* of Men, whose Right to the Ministry should be *uninterrupted* or *indefeasible*. There is no manner of Analogy (as Mr. Law strangely supposes) between the Church's making a Priest and a Sacrament. Sacra-

*ments* being *positive* Religious Ordinances, which we have no *natural* Right to, or Obligation to receive; no Church can have Authority to introduce them, or make them *Parts* of Religion, or give any *Effect* unto them, without the *express* Command and Appointment of Christ the Establisher of the Church: But Christ having once made the *public* Profession of his Religion a Duty, it becomes the *natural* Right of Christians [where Christ hath not interpos'd,] to appoint a *public* Ministry which is *necessary* to that *End*.

His Lordship is represented by Mr. Law, P. 14, 15th, as encouraging all Manner of Divisions, and persuading all different Sects not to regard Union and mutual Communion, and thereby introducing Confusion into the Church.

Any one that ever read his Lordship's *Preservative* with any Degree of *Impartiality*, cannot but see that all this is *unreasonable Calumny* and *groundless Slander*. His Lordship adviseth Christians not to be concern'd at, or regard the vain Presumptions of Men, when they boldly and blasphemously confine *Salvation* to their *particular Communion*; and that upon no better Ground, than a fanciful Pretense of the *Necessity* of an *uninterrupted* Succession of Ministers, through whose Hands alone God's Ordinances and *Covenanted Mercies* can be convey'd.

The Bishop plainly saw, that such a Doctrine as this, if let pass uncontroul'd and unconfuted, would put the Salvation of all Christians into the utmost hazard; and make God's Mercies depend upon a most slender and *invisible Thread*; and by Consequence leave Men in a very *comfortless* Condition: That, let them do what they could, serve God with ever so much *Sincerity*, and use diligently the best Means he had put into their Hands of having all the Ordinances of Religion administered to them; yet for Want of such an Order of Men which Christ himself never appointed, and which they

they could never be *sure* of having; or which, if they could have them, they might have the greatest Reason to fear might be sometimes such as would in the most unchristian manner *tyrannize* over their *Faith* and *Consciences*; they must fall short of obtaining the *Covenanted Mercies* of God thro' Christ. This Doctrin, so *Groundless* and *Unchristian*, the Bishop undertook to confute: And in order thereto, tells those of the *true Protestant Church of England*, who have kept from the *Communion* of those Men that are professed Enemies both to *Church* and *State*, and have set up a separate *Conventicle*, upon the Foot of *Disloyalty* and *Opposition* to a Protestant Government; that they need not be concern'd at the *vain Terrors* of those *presumptuous Men*, who claim to themselves, without all *Truth* or *Right*, this *uninterrupted Succession*, on which they foolishly insist that *Christian Salvation* depends. The Bishop, having shewn that their Pretense to such a *Succession* is *vain* and *groundless*; affirms in general, that God never design'd to put *Christian Salvation* on such a *Nice Point*; and that the *Church of England* [which is also no less true of all other Churches] *Sincerely* professing the Gospel of Christ, and using the Best Means which the *Providence* of God hath given it, of having the *Ordinances* of Christ *rightly and duly administer'd*, may depend upon the Mercies of God thro' Christ; and will run no Hazard of *Salvation*, tho' it should be true that the *Succession* of Pastors from the Apostles hath been *broken* without our *Fault* or *Knowledge*, and that all *Ecclesiastical Power* now in Being, be really deriv'd from, and stand by the Consent of the *National Christian Government*. This is the plain Purport of all the Bishop's Reasonings on this Head in his *Preservative*: And is it not very *unreasonable* in Mr. Law to argue, that such a Doctrin as this, which tends to *unite* and *reconcile* all Christians, *encourages* all Manner of *Divisions*? If Men were once heartily persuaded  
that

that *no one particular Form* of Government was absolutely *necessary* to the Being of the Church, and that there was no such Thing as *Humane Authority in Matters of mere Faith*; and that no Doctrines not *expressly contain'd in Scripture*, were, under the Notion of *Authoritative Interpretations*, or any other Pretense whatsoever, to be *impos'd* as Terms of *Christian Communion*; there would soon be an End of our *unchristian, uncharitable and unhappy Divisions*; at least I am sure this is the readiest and most likely, as well as the only *Christian Method* to obtain so *great a Blessing*. But if Christians will, out of *carnal Interest or Design*, or ill-grounded Pretenses, make *Schisms* in the Church of Christ, they stand *condemned both of themselves, and of all reasonable Men*; and the Bishop's Doctrine gives no Countenance or Encouragement to such, to hope for the favour of God: And no Man hath taken more Pains, or used better Arguments, to lay open the ill Effects of Divisions in Christian Communion, and in a more earnest and Christian Manner endeavour'd to heal and reconcile all our unhappy Differences, than the Bishop hath done: So that it is very *uncharitable, as well as unreasonable*, to suppose that he is now endeavouring to *introduce Confusion*, and to show that there is *no Need of Union*, and that *no one Communion more than another can recommend us to the Favour of God*.

Mr. Law charges the Bishop, P. 17, 18, 19, 29, with *denying all Church-Authority*. He observes that the Bishop says, P. 11th of his Sermon, that *as to the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation, Christ hath left no visible humane Authority behind him: Now, My Lord, says Mr. Law, is not this saying that he hath left no Authority at all? No; unless there is no Authority but in Matters merely relating to Conscience and Salvation. 'Tis not therefore saying, that he has left no Authority at all to the Church; but no Authority at all in Matters of mere Faith and Conscience,*



*science*, so as that the Church *can be said properly to supply his Place*, in making *Laws of mere Religion*. The Church may have *Authority*, though not over the *Faith and Consciences* of Christians. 'Tis Christ's peculiar *Prerogative to rule* There, because he knows the *Hearts and Consciences* of Men, and can *infallibly judge* concerning them: And the Church may *rule* in other *external* Respects.

Mr. Law observes, P. 18<sup>th</sup>, that the Bishop explains his Meaning to be, that *no Christian hath Authority* [any Authority at all] *either to make new Laws for Christ's Subjects, or to impose a Sense upon the Old ones*: [Which Sense shall oblige the *Consciences* of Men to submit to it upon his *mere Authority*], as the Bishop explains himself, saying, P. 15<sup>th</sup>, *They have no Power of interpreting, or adding Laws, and judging Men in such a Sense, that Christians shall be indispensably and absolutely oblig'd to obey those Laws, and submit to those Decisions*: And again, P. 27<sup>th</sup>, *It destroys the Authority of Jesus Christ as King, to set up any other Authority in his Kingdom, to which his Subjects are indispensably and absolutely obliged to submit their Consciences in what is properly called Religion*. And again, P. 30<sup>th</sup>, *All his Subjects are equally his Subjects, and, as such, equally without Authority to alter, to add to, or to Interpret his Laws, so as to claim the absolute Submission of others to such Interpretations*: } or to judge, censure, or punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters purely relating to Conscience: That is, evidently, to judge, censure, or punish others, for not submitting to humane Interpretations, or Doctrines of Men, as to the Law of Christ. What malignant Consequence follows from these Passages?

Mr. Law says, that in them his Lordship has asserted, *That no one is invested with Authority from Christ to act for him*; and that *all the Bishop's Reasonings against absolute Authority, conclude as strongly against all Degrees of Authority*: And he offers five Arguments to prove this: To which I answer,

If Mr. Law means by *acting for Christ*, ruling over the *Faith and Consciences* of Christians; *making new Laws for Christ's Subjects*, or imposing *humane Interpretations* of the *old ones*, as a *Rule of Faith*; and punishing those who will not submit to it as such; then the Bishop does indeed deny that Christ hath given *Any Authority* to Men, to act *thus* for him; and affirms that they who assume such Authority, do usurp his Dominion and *rule in his stead*. But can Mr. Law conceive no *Authority* left to the Church, wherein it *acts for Christ*, unless it be an *absolute Power* of *interpreting* Christ's Laws, and binding those Interpretations as a *Law* upon the *Faith and Consciences* of Christians? This Power is certainly an *Authority* to make *new Laws*, and, being *fallible* in not acting for Christ, but *against* him; and, as the Bishop truly says, *is a taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own*. If Christ had given any such *Authority* to *fallible Men*, *He* would not *rule*, but *They*; because it could not be but that *their Sense* would frequently differ from *his*, and *his Law* would ever be *subordinate* to *Their Interpretations*, and *limited* by them. If a *King*, after he had given his Subjects a *Law*, should not confine the *subordinate Executors* of it to the *express Words* of the *Law* itself, but give them *Authority* to *interpret* it according to their *own Sense*, and leave his Subjects oblig'd to submit to such Interpretation; I would fain know, *who* in this Case is *Legislator*, the *King* himself, or those *absolute authoritative Interpreters*? And does not the same Consequence plainly follow with Regard to the *Laws of Christ*? Christ hath not left the *true* or *infallible* Interpretations of his *Laws* to any Church. Therefore if any Church shall undertake to interpret his *Laws*, and to oblige Christians to submit *absolutely* to *Their Interpretations*; are not *evidently* those *Interpretations*, and not the *Gospel*, the *Law of Christians*? Have we not then a *fallible Rule*

Rule of Faith, instead of an *infallible* one; and *Man*, and not *Christ*, the *Head* and *Ruler* of the Church? Hath not this Pretense of interpreting Christ's Laws in an *authoritative* Manner, been the Method of introducing into Christ's Church all the Errors and Corruptions of *Popery*, which have *defac'd* and almost banish'd *true* Christianity out of the World, and set up *Humane* Tyranny, and *Antichristian* Impositions instead of it? But if Mr. *Law* means by *acting for Christ*, acting *in his Name*, and *by his Authority*, in the *subordinate* Administration of the Church as a *Society* by his Laws; and appointing all Rules for *Decency and Order*, and every Thing necessary for the *external* Government of it; ordering all *outward* Means whereby the Church may be most edify'd by a *public* Profession of Religion; then the Bishop allows, that *Christ hath left behind him a visible Humane Authority to act for him*. He would tell him, that Christ hath given the Church *Authority to teach and baptize all Nations*; to propose his *Gospel*, as a Rule of saving Faith, to all; to instruct Christians out of that *Gospel*; to administer to them the *Sacraments* appointed in that *Gospel*; to receive into the *Communion* of the Church, such as are *willing* to obey; and to reject such, as *refuse* to obey that *Gospel*. And not only thus much, but I will add further; Christ hath given his Church an *Authority to interpret* his Laws for the Instruction and Edification of his People; but not to oblige them to submit their Understandings to *Their* Interpretations as *certain* and *unquestionable* Truths, because they are *fallible* and *uncertain*; or to make them Terms of Christian *Communion* or Parts of Christian Worship, because they are no *Parts* of Christianity: And such Authority is, as was observed, not to act *in the Name of Christ*, but in their *own* Name; it is to substitute their *own* Sense, instead of Christ's, for a *Law* of *Christianity*. If Mr. *Law* is

not satisfy'd with this *Authority* which is truly *great* and *glorious*, and thinks it not enough, the Bishop, I am perswaded, would tell him moreo'ver, that the *Church hath a Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies; and Authority in Controversies of Faith.* Not to make *new* Articles of Faith, or to impose an *Interpretation* of the *old ones* for *Articles*; which is the very same Thing. This Authority, the Protestant Church never laid *Claim* to: But to propose out of God's Word, to the People committed to their Charge, *That Faith* which Christ hath *expressly* requir'd; and to oblige all, who are of that Communion, to submit to This only as the *Rule and Law of Conscience and Salvation*; and to examine all *Controversies* by that *express* Rule and Law *only*: To receive into *Communion*, all who shall *confess this Faith*; and reject those who shall at any Time *deny* it. Neither *Christ* nor his *Apostles* gave any more *Authority* to the Church in those Matters; nor did it in the most *primitive* Times ever challenge any more, or make any other Terms of *Communion* either for *Clergy* or *Laity*, than the Terms of *Baptism*, which are truly the *Fundamentals*. If Mr. *Law* demands yet any more *Authority*, let us know what it is; and he shall be told whether it be reasonable or no, or consistent with Christ's being the *King* of his Church; and I hope he will desire none that is *inconsistent*. Thus it no way appears that the Bishop's Reasonings, against an *absolute Authority* in the Church; in Matters of *mere Faith and Salvation*, conclude against *all* Manner of *Church Authority*; nor does Mr. *Law's* five Arguments at all prove that they do. And if he thought they prov'd against *All* and *Any Degrees* of *Authority* in Matters of *mere Faith*, as the Bishop explains it; it would have been worth his while, in Defense of his Cause, to have shewn *what Authority* the Church hath in Matters of *mere Faith and Conscience*. But instead of that, he tells the Bishop,

shop, P. 21, That all the Lower House of Convocation unanimously conceive, that your Doctrine tended to subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of England.

I wonder how Mr. Law comes to be sure of the Truth of this Assertion; since the lower House of Convocation never declar'd their Assent to the Charge contain'd in the Report of the Committee. But be it so; 'Tis true, the Bishop's Doctrine does tend to subvert all Government which any Church shall claim over the Faith and Consciences of Christians; because Christ immediately and only rules there; but yet it leaves to the Church all That Government which it can justly claim, or in Truth actually does claim, untouch'd. No Church, but that of Rome, professes to be Ruler of the Faith of Christians, and to oblige the Conscience implicitly to submit to its Doctrines, as a Rule of Faith: And none but such as contend for Popish Principles under a Protestant Name, will pretend that the Church hath any such Power. But as to the Discipline of the Church; this is appointed to restrain Disorder in Practice and outward Behaviour, and hath nothing to do with Matters of mere Faith and Conscience; unless Mr. Law supposes the Church may impose their own Sense for Matter of Faith, and make Doctrines not contain'd in Scripture to be Terms of Communion: Which is directly contrary to the express Declaration of the Church of England, and is the very Essence of Popery. So that the Bishop does not at all meddle with Church-discipline, and there can be no Room for such a Charge.

Mr. Law next proceeds to tell his Lordship, P. 22, 23, 24. Your Lordship seems to think all is lost as to Church-Power [in Matters of Faith] because the Dr. [Snape] does not claim an absolute one, but allows it to be subject to Scripture; as if all Authority was absolute, or none at all. I shall therefore shew, that Church-Power

*Power is a real Authority, tho' it is not Absolute. The Arguments are; 1st, I hope it will be allow'd me that our Saviour came into the World with Authority; but it was not lawful for the Jews to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to those Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures.*

*Again; the Apostles were sent into the World with Authority; but yet those who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unsuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were oblig'd not to obey them.*

*I hope, my Lord, it may be allow'd, that the Sacraments are real Means of Grace; but it is certain they are only conditionally so, if those that partake of them are endow'd with suitable Dispositions of Piety and Vertue. Now, my Lord, if there can be such a Thing as instituted real Means of Grace, which are only conditionally apply'd; I cannot see why there may not be an instituted real Authority in the Church, which is only to be conditionally obey'd.*

*To all this, I reply; 1st, The Church's Authority in Matters of Faith, is not only subject to Scripture; but by necessary Consequence is subject to every one's sense of Scripture; and so is plainly none at all. The Church cannot have Power to impose its own Sense of Scripture, tho' it be true, for Matter of Faith; because it may be false; and the Understandings of others may not perceive that it is true, or may impartially judge it to be false; and all have a Right to judge for themselves according to what appears to them to be the true Sense and Meaning of Scripture; and it is impossible for any other to judge for them. So that in Reality, Church-Authority is either Absolute or none at all. In the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation, as the Bishop explains himself, it is plainly none at all. The Church hath no Authority to make New Articles of Faith, or to impose an Interpretation of the old ones upon Others for Articles of*

*of*

of Faith; No one can be oblig'd to receive any Doctrines which the Church or any Number of fallible Men whatsoever shall purpose, as a *Christian Truth*, if it appear to him to be either *contrary to Scripture*, or not to be found in it, or not the *true Interpretation of the Sense of Scripture*. And the Scriptures nowhere speak either of the *Doctrines of the Church*, or of the *Authority of the Church in Matters of Faith*: And in Reality there can be no such Thing as either, which can ever be a *Rule or Law* to Christians; because the Church has no Evidence whereby it can prove that it *cannot* or *does not* ever err in its *Decisions*, and by Consequence that they can be depended upon thro' their mere Authority. But in the Appointment of *indifferent Rites and Ceremonies*, and *condemning disorderly Practice and Behaviour*, the Church hath an *absolute Authority*, i. e. is to be obey'd upon its own *mere Authority*. 'Tis the same in the *State*: The *Legislative Civil Power* hath an *absolute Authority* to make Laws for the Safety and Good of the *Public*, and to determine the differences about the Rights and Properties of the Subject; but hath *no Authority at all* to make Laws *destructive* of the *public Good*, or contrary to the Law of Nature or of God's Revelation; wherever it is known; or to make any Man to submit in *Act* to what is *immoral*, or approve in *Conscience* what he judges *unreasonable* or unjust. *Secondly*, *Christ* came into the World with an *absolute Authority* to declare God's Will to Mankind, and to institute a Religion which was to take Place of all others: *His Authority or Laws* could not have Force, where there were not Means of owning or knowing him; and so *there* he had *no Authority at all*: But yet it was *absolute* over all his *Subjects*. Both the *Jews* and *Gentiles* had a Right to examine whether he came from God, and was the *true Christian Legislator*; so that the Acceptance of his

his Person was to depend upon the Evidence he gave, and the Conviction of Men's Minds concerning him: But where he had *Authority at all*, i. e. in his *own Kingdom*, where Men were convinc'd that he was the Christ, there he had an *absolute Power* to make *his Law* the *Rule* of their *Faith* and *Consciences*, and to determine the Affairs of their *Salvation*, and had no *Superior* nor *Equal* in this *Kingdom of his Church*. And tho' the *positive* Laws of his Religion might be contrary to those either of the *Jewish* or any other Religion; yet were his Subjects oblig'd to receive them, and firmly to believe every Point of Doctrine which he reveal'd, upon his *mere Authority*, tho' they could not find out its Truth by *Reason*, or the Law of *Nature*, or any other even *reveal'd* Law. Hath the *Church* any Authority like this, or any Authority at all of the same Kind? The *Apostles* likewise, *within* the Kingdom of Christ, had, as being inspired, an *absolute Authority* to *declare* his Laws by his *Command*, and bind them upon the *Consciences* of Men, by their *mere Authority* also; and no one has a Right to oppose his *own* Opinion against *Their* Declarations: But the *Church* hath no Authority at all of this Nature; no one being oblig'd to receive its Declarations or Interpretations any further, than he shall *judge* them to agree with those of the *Apostles*, and the express Word of Christ. *Christ* had *no Authority at all*, to be receiv'd by those who knew him not, or without fulfilling the *Prophecies* concerning his coming: But where he had *Authority at all*, i. e. in his *own Kingdom*, and amongst his own Subjects, there it was *absolute*. So likewise where the *Apostle's* had any *Authority at all*, (that is, not to hinder Men from examining their *Mission*, or judging whether the Doctrines they preach'd were contrary to Reason or no, which was one Test of their *Mission*; for in either of these Cases they plainly had *no Authority at all*, but to *declare* the Doctrine...

Christ



Christ, and to oblige all Christians to receive their *Declarations*,) here the *Authority* they had was *absolute*. But no Church can justly pretend to *such Authority*, that is, hath *any Authority at all of the same Nature*. So that in those Particulars wherein Christ and his *Apostles* had *any Authority at all*, it was an *absolute Authority*. Lastly, The receiving of the *Sacraments*, like *Prayer* and the outward Performance of all other Duties of Religion, are *absolute Means of Grace*, or of the Favour and Mercy of God, to all Christians capable of *Grace*, or who perform them in due manner; but have *no Power, no Efficacy at all* upon such as are not capable of, or dispos'd for it, or who do not duly perform those Duties. So that the *Sacraments* also, where they have *any Power or Efficacy at all*, it is *absolute*, that is, agreeably to the Bishop's Definition, *always inherent in every Subject in all Circumstances*.

Mr. Law concludes, P. 24, from the Arguments above consider'd, *that the Church hath a real Authority* [in the Affairs of *Conscience* or *Salvation*, or to impose its own Doctrines as Matters of Faith, which is the subject of the Bishop's Argument,] *to be only conditionally obey'd*: And argues, That its being *conditional* does not make it cease to be *real Authority*, because all Authority both in *Church* and *State* is but *conditional*; that no other but a *conditional Obedience* is due to *civil Governours*, because no one is to obey them in *Things unlawful*; and that no other than a *conditional Obedience* is due to *Christ and his Apostles*, because they were only to be obey'd by those who thought their *Doctrines* worthy of God: And thence infers, that it is no Argument against *Church Authority* [in Matters of Faith,] because Men are to judge of the *Lawfulness* of its *Injunctions*. My answer is; If Mr. Law sincerely owns that Christians may judge of the *Lawfulness* of the *Injunctions* of the *Church*, he really denies all *Church-Authority* in matters of Faith: For what Authority can any

one have over *me*, if I am to *judge* whether his *Injunctions* are right or no, and to *obey* or *not obey* accordingly? Therefore if I am to judge whether the Doctrines of the Church be *agreeable* to Scripture or not, and am oblig'd to submit to, or profess them no further than I judge them to be agreeable; That which governs my *Conscience*, is not the *Authority* of the *Church*, but the *Authority* of the *Scripture*, according to *my own Sense* and Judgment of it; And this indeed is *true Christian Protestant Liberty*. *Civil Authority* may take Place where the *Injunctions* of it are *unreasonable* or *unjust*, because it demands not the Assent of the *Conscience* to the *Lawful use* of them, but the *mere outward Act*; and we may often in *Practice* submit to things, that we do not judge to be *rightly* commanded: But in Matters of *Faith*, which are Points of *mere Judgment*, my *judging* whether a Doctrine propos'd to me be *true*, or *agreeable* to *Scripture* or not, and assenting to it accordingly; takes away all *Authority* that any one can have over me in such Matters which relate *to the Judgment only*, and without the Submission of which to the *mere Authority* [which Mr. Law himself is forc'd to disallow] there can be plainly *no Submission*, and consequently *no Authority at all*. Just as in Matters of *Action*; if I had a Power of *judging* whether the Laws of the *civil State* were in all Points *just* or *reasonable* or not, and was only oblig'd to *act* according to the Determination of my own *Judgment*, and not to regard their *mere Authority*; then the *Civil Injunctions* would not properly be *Laws* to me, or have any *real Authority* over me. But all Mr. Laws false Reasoning is owing to his not considering the true Meaning of the Words *conditional* and *absolute*, when apply'd to *Authority*. All *Authority* is *absolute*, which is *independent* in its Kind, and not subject to a *Superior*; so that all *Legislative Authority*, about which the Dispute is, is *absolute*. The examining the *Mis-*

on of a Person, or judging of the *Lawfulness* or *Morality* of Injunctions, are not *Conditions* that limit Authority so as to make it more or less *absolute*; but are only *rational Motives* to induce us to own or disown the Authority *at all*; Because Laws are propos'd to *Men*, and not to *Beasts*. If the Authority when made known, is *subordinate* to a Superior of the *same Kind*, or within the *same Dominions*, then it is *not absolute*; if not, then it is *absolute*. The *Conditions* of natural *Morality*, *Truth*, and *Justice*, limit all Authority both *Humane* and *Divine*; so that if *such Conditions* make Authority cease to be *absolute*, there can be no such Thing as *absolute Authority* either in *God* or *Man*: Therefore these are not *Conditions* which make Authority *not absolute*, but without which there could be no Authority *at all*. Thus *God* is the *absolute* invifible Lord of all the Earth; his Laws extend to all Mankind, nor can any other Authority controul or limit his Power; and yet his Laws are, if we may so say, *limited* by the eternal Law of *Truth* and *Righteousness*; that is, He cannot enjoyn any Thing that is *unrighteous* or *untrue*, or contrary to that *Reason* which he hath given us. Again: *Christ* is the *absolute* Lord of the *Christian Church*; he hath *absolute* uncontrollable Authority to make Laws for the whole Church; nor are his Laws subject to any other; Which shews that they have *absolute Authority*: And yet they cannot be contrary to *Reason*, or take Place where his *Mission* is not known or acknowledg'd; But their having *absolute Authority* is seen, in that, where his *Mission* is receiv'd, he his *sole* Lord and Legislator; his Laws are obey'd with *absolute* Submission to his *mere Authority*; nor can his Subjects in any Case appeal from him to another *Judge*, or try his Injunctions by the *Rule* of any other Law. So likewise the *Authority* of the *Apostles* was in its Kind *absolute*; that is, they had

the *absolute Authority* of *Declarers* of *Christ's Law*; and their *Declarations* were to be submitted to, as *certain* and *infallible* Truths; nor have *Christians* any *Power* or *Right* to examine their *Declarations* by any other, or to *appeal* from them to any other *Declarers* of *Christ's Law*; Which shews that their *Declarations* have *absolute Authority* in them. In all humane *Civil Governments*, the *Legislator* hath *absolute Authority* of making *Laws*; not to enact any Thing contrary to the *Divine Law*, or *destructive* of the *public Good*; but because its *Authority*, so far as it is *any at all*, is *independent*, and not *subject* to any other *Power* of the *same Kind*, and therefore is *absolute*. *Lastly*, The *Church* hath an *absolute Authority* to make *Laws* for the *external Government* of it; it hath no *superiour* in its *Kind*, nor does there lye any *Appeal* from its *Authority* to any other: And yet it cannot have *Authority* to enjoin *Ceremonies* that are plainly *superstitious*, *indecent*, or *profane*: But in making *Laws* concerning *Matters of Faith*, it evidently hath *no Authority at all*; all *Laws* of this *Kind* being already enacted by a *superior Authority*, to which the *Church* is *always* *subject*. Nor can it *interpret* those *Laws* with any *Authority* to be submitted to for the sake of the *mere Authority*; because, the *Laws* themselves being *infallible*, unless the *Interpretations* be so likewise, they cannot be *depended* upon, and so cannot have any *real Authority* in them as a *Rule of Faith* and *Conscience*, or any *Right* to be *impos'd* as *Terms of Communion* or *Worship*. And if they are to be submitted to no further by any [as *Mr. Law* is forc'd to allow,] than as they are judg'd to express the *true Sense* and *Meaning* of *Christ's Law*; then have they plainly no more *Authority* in them, than the *Interpretations* of any *private Person*, which are always to be submitted to by all who judge them to contain th

*true Sense of Scripture.* Therefore when the Church, in the 20th Article, is said to have Authority in Controversies of Faith, it cannot mean that it hath Authority to determine, with absolute Certainty, Points of Doctrine not certainly determin'd in Scripture; or to impose its Determinations of any Controversies of Faith upon the Consciences of Christians by its own mere Authority; But that it hath Authority to call any Controversies, that may arise either through the Ignorance or Perverseness of Christians, to the Test and express Rule of Scripture; and that in all Controversies wherein the Church shall think fit to interpose its public Judgment, it ought to be regarded by the contending Parties; and no Determinations ought to be made against it, without particularly considering the Reasons given for that public Judgment. And above all, the Church hath Authority to oblige all its Members in Controversies of Faith to keep strictly to the Rule of Scripture; and not to endeavour to impose upon one another, for Matter of Faith, any Doctrine not expressly contain'd therein; and, in all Differences of Opinion, to oblige all Parties to maintain mutual Forbearance and Charity.

The Bishop having forc'd Dr. Snape to own that the Church hath no Authority in Matters of Faith, unless the Doctrines it teacheth be agreeable to Scripture, of which every one to whom the Doctrines are propos'd is to judge; which is all that his Lordship ever asserted or contended for; asks the Doctor in his Answer, P. 24, *Is this the whole you can make of it [Church Authority] after all your boasted Zeal for mere Authority?* and adds, *why may not I be allow'd to say, No Man on Earth has an absolute Authority, as well as you?* Upon this Mr. Law tells the Bishop, P. 27th; *My Lord, there can be no understanding of this, unless mere Authority and absolute Authority be taken for the same Thing by your Lordship: But, my Lord, (he goes on) is not the smallest Particle of Matter, mere Matter*

and

and is it therefore the same as the whole Mass of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is mere Space, the same as infinite Space? How comes it then that mere Authority is the same as absolute Authority? His Lordship's Words and Meaning are clear and plain Truth: And that Mr. Law does not understand them, is Want of Attention or Sagacity. Mere Authority is the same as absolute Authority, and absolute Authority is mere Authority. If I obey one upon his mere Authority, 'tis because his Authority is absolute, i. e. supreme and independent in its Kind: If the Authority was not thus absolute, I should not obey him upon his mere Authority, but upon the mere Authority of him who hath the absolute Authority, and whose subordinate Delegate and Agent the other is. But Mr. Law's Query is not pertinent; and there is no understanding it, unless absolute Authority and A L L Authority be by Him taken for the same Thing. But is not the smallest Particle of Matter, absolute Matter? Is it therefore the same with the whole Mass of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is absolute Space, the same as infinite Space? Is the Czar of Muscovy, because he is an absolute Monarch, the King of the whole Earth? How comes it then that absolute Authority, is the same as A L L Authority? And had he put the last Question, as his Argument requir'd him to do, viz; How comes it then that mere Authority is the same, [not as absolute, but] as All Authority; he would have discover'd the Imposition and Absurdity of the whole. An Authority surely may be absolute, and yet not the Whole of its Kind. And this is the Case with all particular humane Authority both in Church and State; which is absolute within its own Jurisdiction only. Thus it appears, that Mr. Law's Philosophy is as bad as his Divinity.

Mr. Law proceeds to ask his Lordship; When the Church enjoys Matters of Indifference, is She obeyed for any Reason, but for her mere Authority? But your Lordship allows no Obedience to mere Authority, and therefore

*no Obedience even in different Matters: Thus do these Arguments of yours, lay all Waste in the Church. But, are Matters of Faith and Eternal Salvation, with Mr. Law, Matters of Indifference? If they are, I am sorry for him: If they are not, why does he talk so much out of the Way, about Matters of Indifference, when the Bishop was talking about nothing but Matters merely relating to Conscience and Salvation? There is no Obedience, properly speaking, but to absolute Authority. I am not properly said to obey him that hath not an absolute Authority over me; and therefore all subordinate Powers are only obey'd for the sake of, and with Reference to, the supreme or absolute Authority. When the Church enjoyns Matters of Indifference, for Decency and Order, it is obey'd for its mere or absolute Authority: The Bishop every where allows this, and has elsewhere strenuously maintain'd this Authority of the Church; and no Men in their Senses will ever deny it. But what's all this to an Authority in Matters of mere Faith and Conscience? to an Authority of making Doctrines to be Laws of Christianity, which Christ and his Apostles have not expressly made so? to an Authority of binding humane and fallible Interpretations of Scripture upon the Consciences of Men, as a Rule of Faith and Salvation? when it is most evident that nothing can ever Rule the Heart and Conscience, but a divine and infallible Authority: And therefore the Church of Rome, pretending a Dominion over the Faith of Christians, does with a very consistent Arrogance lay Claim to Infallibility also, in order to manage the Usurpation of so great a Power.*

Mr. Law has not yet done with his Lordship; but says, P. 28th, *I must not omit one [Argument,] my Lord, which falls as heavy upon the State, and makes all civil Government unlawful: Your Words are these: "As the Church of Christ, is the Kingdom of Christ, he himself is King; and in this it is*  
*" imply'd*

“ imply’d that he is the Law-giver to his Subjects, and himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation.” *If there is any Truth or Force* (says Mr. Law) *in this Argument, it concludes with the same Truth and Force against all Authority in the Kingdoms of this World. In Scripture we are told, The most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men* (Dan. 4. 17.) *that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King,* (Isa. 33. 22.) *Now if because Christ is King of the Church, it must be in this imply’d, that he is sole Law-giver to his Subjects; it is plain to a Demonstration, that because God is King and Lawgiver of the whole Earth, therefore he is sole Law-giver to his Subjects; and consequently, that all civil Authority, all humane Laws, are mere Invasions and Usurpations upon God’s Authority as King of the whole Earth. He adds, asking; Is no Body to have any Jurisdiction in Christ’s Kingdom, because he is King of it? How then comes any one to have any Authority in the Kingdoms of this World, when God has declar’d himself the Lawgiver and King of the whole World?*

The First Text here allerdg’d by Mr. Law, relates only to God’s *Providential* Rule, whereby he disposeth of Nations and Kingdoms according to his *mere* Will and Pleasure. The Second, to the particular State of the *Jews*, whose *civil* as well as *religious* Lawgiver God himself was, and to whom it was commanded concerning the Laws which he had given them, *Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it.* Deut. 4. 2. Therefore these Texts are very improperly offer’d. But because God is both truly *King* and *Lawgiver* to the *whole Earth*; as Christ is *King* and *Lawgiver* to the *whole Church*; I shall maintain the Inference, that God is *sole Lawgiver* to his Subjects in the Affairs of *mere Morality* and *Natural Religion*, as Christ is to his Church in the Affairs *merely* relating to *Faith* and *reveal’d Religion*. And Mr. Law’s *Consequence* is as wide from these *Premisses*



as *East* from *West*. 'Tis this: He that has not *Autho-  
rity* in *every thing*, has *Authority* in *Nothing*; he  
that has not *a'l* *Authority*, has *no* *Authority*; he  
that has not *Authority* to do what 'tis *impossible* for  
him being *fallible* to do or to have *Authority* to  
do, has not *Authority* to do what is in his *Power*,  
and what he has *Authority* to do. The Bishop argued,  
that Christ being *King* of his Church, must be the  
*sole Lawgiver* to his *Subjects* in the *Affairs* of *Consci-  
ence* and *Salvation*: As if it was such a strange Thing,  
that a *King* should have the *sole* *Power* of making  
*Laws* for his *Subjects*; or as if one could be real-  
ly an *absolute King* without it. But Mr. *Law*, not  
considering that Christ's is a *Divine*, *Invisible*, and  
*Spiritual* *Dominion* over the *Heart* and *Conscience*,  
over which he rules by his *infallible* *Laws* which *re-  
late immediately* and *only* to them; says, that in *Conse-  
quence* of this *Doctrin*e, *all humane Jurisdiction* both  
*in Church* and *State*, *must be an Usurpation* upon the  
*Authority* of *God* who is *King* of *all the Earth*, and of  
*Christ* who is *King* of his *Church*. Which is plainly  
to say, that if once the *divin*e, *invisible* *Dominion*,  
and *Spiritual* *Laws* of *God* and *Christ* over the  
*World* and the *Church*, be acknowledg'd; there must  
be an *End* of all *humane visible* *Government* and  
*Laws* for the *external* *Order* and *Polity* of them: That  
if *God* and *Christ* have the *sole* *Authority* to make  
*Laws* for the *Direction* of the *Heart* and *Conscience*  
*in* *Matters* of a *Moral* and *Religious* *Nature*; no  
other can have *Authority* either to execute those  
*Laws*, or to make *Laws* for the *Direction* of the  
*external* *Action* in *Matters* merely of a *Civil* *Nature*.  
And in short it is to say, that if there be any *Laws*  
and *Government* merely with relation to the *Af-  
fairs* of the *other* *World*, there can be no *Laws* and  
*Government* merely with Relation to the *Affairs* of  
*this* *World*. All these *Absurdities* are contain'd in  
Mr. *Law's* *Consequence* and *Question* from the *Bishop's*  
*Argument*. The *Truth* of the whole, plainly is

No body hath any *Jurisdiction* or *Authority* either in the *Kingdom* of God or of Christ, wherein they themselves immediately rule over the *Hearts* and *Consciences* of Men. God rules by the *Law of Nature*, and Christ by the *Law of the Gospel*; And no *humane* Authority whatsoever can interpose their Power either to *add* or to *diminish* any Thing from these *Laws*; or to punish any for those Breaches of them, which only relate to the *Heart* and *Conscience*; or take Cognizance of any Principles or Practices founded on them, which are *merely* of a religious Nature. And thus God and Christ are the *sole* Lawgivers in their *Kingdoms*. The *Gospel* is a *Law of Christian Faith* and Practice, which entirely relates *only* to the *Mind* and *Conscience*; and no *humane* Authority hath any Thing to do there. But since the *public* Profession of the *Gospel* cannot but be attended with many *external ritual* Circumstances, merely relating to *Order* and *decency of Action*, about which Christ has given no *Laws*; he hath left these to *humane Decision*; and herein *humane* Authority is *properly* concern'd. The *Law of Nature*, is a *Law of Faith* and Practice, which not only relates to the *Heart* and *Conscience*, but also to the common Rights of Mankind, which may be preserv'd or hurt by mutual Practices. All Principles and Practices founded on this *Law*, or relating to it, which regard *only* the *Conscience*, and interfere not with, or violate the *Property* of others; of these *God* is *only* the *Judge*, and hath appointed a *Tribunal* for the Tryal of all such in another State. But for such as disturb or hurt the Rights of others, and threaten Confusion and Destruction to Society, and so require *immediate* Restraints and *Temporal* Punishments; with respect to these, God hath left *Man* to his own Defence, and to consult his own Safety against them, by such Means as he shall think necessary: And so the annexing *Temporal* Rewards and Punishments to the *Laws of Nature*, becomes a Part of *humane* Jurisdiction, and a Branch of Man's Authority

**Authority.** And further, since Abundance of *external* Circumstances and Actions *in themselves indifferent*, have a Relation to the *well* or *ill-being* of Society, and God hath interpos'd no Laws about these; these also come within the Jurisdiction of *humane* Authority, and God hath given Men a Right to make Laws, and enforce them by Penalties about these Things. Thus God and Christ exclude all *humane* Authority out of the Kingdom wherein they themselves *immediately* rule; and yet have left Room enough for the Exercise of *humane* Authority within a Province proper for it.

I shall leave the rest of Mr. *Law's* Book, about *Prayer*, &c. to be compar'd with the Bishop's Answer to the first Letter of Dr. *Snape*.

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**FINIS.**